CHAMBER COMPETITIVENESS, POLITICAL POLARIZATION, AND THE BATTLE FOR LEGISLATIVE MAJORITY CONTROL

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ABSTRACT

Jacob Smith: Chamber Competitiveness, Polarization, and the Battle for Legislative Majority Control
(Under the direction of Jason Roberts)

This project examines how legislative chamber competitiveness (i.e. how likely it is that majority control of a legislative chamber will flip to the other party) and political polarization (i.e. the ideological differences between the parties) affect the battle for majority control of legislative bodies. Examining these factors in the context of prospective candidates, political parties, and incumbent legislators, I posit that political actors take chamber competitiveness into account because every conceivably winnable seat is important, as that seat could be pivotal in determining majority control when a chamber is competitive. At the same time, I theorize that political polarization has important effects on decision-making by political actors because a greater degree of polarization produces a wider gap between the policies each party would pursue in government, thus increasing the stakes of an election outcome. Finally, I examine the effect of conditions of high political polarization and low chamber competitiveness on members of the minority party, arguing that such conditions are likely to be unpleasant for these minority party political actors. Ultimately, I argue that these unfavorable conditions are likely to lead to disengagement (e.g. not running for office, not raising large amounts of money, retiring) by minority party political actors.

To my grandparents.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

On September 9, 2015, Senator Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) announced that she was not running for the newly open North Dakota governorship in 2016, thus robbing Democrats of a strong recruit for the office, yet cheering national Democratic leaders at the same time (Pathé 2015). At first glance, it seems strange to assert that Democrats would be glad that their strongest possible recruit was passing on a winnable race, but that is the reaction that came from national Democrats, as Washington Post political reporter James Hohmann tweeted that "Washington Democrats are popping champagne to celebrate Heidi Heitkamp's decision to stay in the Senate" (Hohmann 2015). To understand why Democrats had this reaction, one should consider the political context surrounding Senator Heitkamp's decision. After losing nine seats and their Senate majority in 2014, Senate Democrats appeared to face a narrow but realistic path to winning a Senate majority in 2016, with seven Republican senators from states won by Barack Obama in 2012 up for reelection in 2016 (Shepard 2015). If Senator Heitkamp had decided to run for Governor of North Dakota, a recently passed law by the Republican-controlled state legislature would have required her replacement to be chosen by a special election in early 2017 (rather than by gubernatorial appointment), where Democrats would have faced an uphill battle to retain the seat in a Republican-leaning state like North Dakota (Nowatzki 2015). In other words, a decision from Heitkamp to run for governor would have made it more difficult for Democrats to win the Senate majority in 2016.

Also underlying the reaction from national Democrats is the notion that majority control of the Senate is something worth having for a political party. Political scientists tend to portray

the majority leader as weak in the Senate due to the empowerment of the minority party through procedural rules such as the filibuster (for example see Binder and Smith 1997; but also see Den Hartog and Monroe 2011). However, Democrats' reaction to Heitkamp staying in the Senate, which makes it more likely they could reassume majority party status in 2017, suggests that holding the majority is important in an era of record polarization (Hare, Poole, and Rosenthal 2014). The importance of holding the Senate majority was made especially clear when Senate Republicans announced they would not hold hearings for any nominee that President Obama picked for the open seat on the Supreme Court (Everett and Thrush 2016).

While one might dismiss Heitkamp's decision and the ensuing reaction as anecdotal, this is not the first time something like this occurred in the early months of the 2016 election cycle. Earlier in 2015, Senators Claire McCaskill (D-MO) and Joe Manchin (D-WV) also announced that they would not run for open governorships in their respective states (Cheney 2015a &b). Similar to North Dakota, West Virginia's legislature considered a bill that would have meant Senator Manchin's replacement would have been chosen in a special election were he elected governor and the veto-proof Republican majority in the Missouri legislature could pass a similar law if McCaskill had won the governorship (Cardosi 2015). Additionally, similar to Heitkamp's decision not to run for governor, these decisions were hailed as good news for national Democrats' hope to win back the Senate majority (DeBonis 2015).

At the federal level, considerations of chamber competitiveness and polarization do not apply exclusively to the Senate. Even more so than the Senate, the House has come to experience high levels of political polarization in recent years (Hare, Poole, and Rosenthal 2014). Unlike the Senate, however, winning majority control of the House was generally viewed as an uphill battle for Democrats in 2016 (House 2015). In a departure from their Senate counterparts, House

Democrats saw several of their incumbents in Republican-leaning seats opt to run for higher office in 2016 instead of seeking re-election, with Representatives Ann Kirkpatrick (D-AZ) and Patrick Murphy (D-FL) announcing their candidacies for the U.S. Senate in 2016 in the second quarter of 2015 (Cahn 2015b.). Given the options of potentially serving as part of a Senate majority, or (should they win reelection) continuing to be constantly outvoted as part of the minority in the House, these two legislators decided to run for the chamber where they seemed to have a higher probability of serving as part of the majority party.

In this dissertation, I examine chamber competitiveness, political polarization and how these two factors relate to the battle of majority control of political institutions. While the opening vignette of this introductory chapter is about the decision to run for office, I look at a number of decisions made by political actors including the decision to run, candidate recruitment from the perspective of political parties, incumbent retirement, and fundraising by legislative incumbents for the political party. Additionally, I consider decisions made by political actors in an array of legislative institutions in the United States, including the U.S. House, U.S. Senate, and state legislatures. Further seeking to expand the scope of inquiry, I analyze data from both the historical and modern U.S. House and U.S. Senate. Examining how chamber competitiveness and polarization affects a variety of decisions made by an assortment of political actors in a range of time periods has the potential to demonstrate the generalizability and robustness of the theory presented in this dissertation.

While the outcomes have been different, recent decisions made by senators and members of the House in marginal seats suggest that institution-level factors can be influential on the actions of individual political actors. Although this study focuses specifically on two factors—chamber competitiveness and polarization—it has broader implications for the study of

American politics. By illustrating how institution-level factors can affect the actions of individuals or parties, this study demonstrates the importance of context in the actions of political actors. This study is not the first to examine the importance of political context (for example see Shepsle 1989), but many previous studies examine the influence of political context on mass political behavior (for example see Wright 1977, Moore and Vanneman 2003, and Layman and Green 2006, among others). Candidates, parties, and legislators exhibit clear differences from the mass public, the focus of many studies of political behavior; at the same time, these political actors still engage in behavior that has the potential to be influenced by political context. By examining the role of chamber competitiveness and polarization in determining the behavior of potential candidates, parties, and incumbent legislators, this study begins the process of achieving a broader understanding of how contextual factors affect the behavior of an array of political actors.

While a central focus of this dissertation is the battle for legislative control in the contemporary Congress, the goal of this research is to construct a broader framework for understanding legislative elections and to present a theory for when chamber competitiveness and polarization are likely to be more or less influential on the behavior of political actors. With this broader framework, one can achieve a deeper understanding of both political eras based upon the level of chamber competitiveness and political polarization present at that time. In the context of recent politics, the theory presented in this dissertation provides the background for understanding why Senators Manchin, McCaskill and Heitkamp chose to remain in the Senate in 2016, while Representatives Kirkpatrick and Murphy ran for higher office rather than seek reelection.

Literature Review

Before presenting a theory of how competitiveness and polarization affect the behavior of political actors it is helpful to discuss previous literature pertaining to these factors and the political decision-making process.[1] During the long periods of Democratic control of the U.S. Senate (1955-1981) and U.S. House (1955-1995), the widespread belief that majority control was not competitive affected the thoughts and actions of minority party Republicans (Connelly and Pitney 1994, Lee 2016). With Democrats being described as the "'party of government'" Republicans struggled to recruit strong challengers and keep incumbents from leaving the House to advance their careers (Connelly and Pitney 1994, 12). Reflecting their unfavorable circumstances, incumbent Republicans were not "hungry for a majority" and were generally unwilling to participate in party fundraising efforts (Ibid, 154). This all changed when Republicans, to the surprise of most of the country, took control of Congress in 1994.

Following the 1994 election as congressional majorities came to be viewed as being at stake in every election, Heberlig and Larson (2005, 2007, 2010, 2012), among others (also see Currinder 2003, Deering and Wahlbeck 2006, Green 2008), have demonstrated that numerous aspects of what it means to be a member of Congress have undergone substantial changes in recent years since the House majority became more competitive following the 1994 elections.[2] Increasingly, safe-seat incumbents are expected to help the party raise money by redistributing campaign or leadership PAC funds to the party or directly to vulnerable members of their party. Heberlig and Larson (2012) find that advancement in the institution increasingly requires a commitment to raise money for the party. While other factors such as legislative loyalty and time

[1] By chamber competitiveness, I mean the probability that a legislative majority will flip in the election.

[2] S. Smith (2014) also discusses how the rise of an attainable Senate majority following the 1980 election contributed to the development of the dysfunctional "Senate Syndrome" that characterizes the modern Senate.

commitments to the party are also important, when majority control is at stake it is crucial for members who want to receive or remain in important leadership positions to financially contribute to those races that are likely to make a difference in the battle for majority control. Indeed, even when Congress is in session members are now expected to spend about four hours a day on the telephone engaged in "call time," calling potential donors to raise money for their upcoming races if they hold a vulnerable seat or the overall party efforts if they hold a safe seat (Grimm and Siddiqui 2013). As the research discussed in this paragraph suggests, recent research on the effect of chamber competitiveness generally tends to focus on financing majority control post-1994. The effect of chamber competitiveness on party fundraising is one of several phenomena to be studied in this dissertation. As such, this research serves as a starting point to examine how chamber competitiveness might affect how chamber competitiveness affects member and party fundraising, among an array of other behaviors, across various political time periods in an array of legislative bodies.

Also crucial to examining how chamber competitiveness affects the behavior of political actors is having a method to measure this phenomenon. In terms of measuring the level of competition for national legislative institutions, current literature on the U.S. House tends to use a dichotomous distinction where the majority is either at stake or non-competitive. In contrast, at the state level, a number of measures have been created to measure the level of party competition. Among the most used measures in state politics literature is the Ranney Index, although this measure incorporates party control of the governorship—in addition to looking at the makeup of legislative bodies—in coming to an overall measure of Democratic Party strength in a particular state (Ranney 1976). Thus, this measure taps into the overall state of competition in a state, rather than that of a specific legislative institutions. Focusing more specifically on state

legislative institutions, Holbrook and Van Dunk (1993) create a measure of legislative competition based upon district-level electoral competition. These measures, irrespective of their particulars, demonstrate that competition does not necessarily have to be considered to be a dichotomous measure and serve as a guide in constructing my own measure of chamber competition that can be used to measure competitiveness across an array of legislative institutions over time and space.

While typically examined separately from chamber competitiveness, political polarization also has the potential to affect the behavior of political actors. Thus, discussing theories of party influence in Congress also provides an important foundation for the theory presented in the next chapter. Under the conditional party government (CPG) theory of party influence, party leadership only exerts influence over the caucus when policy differences exist between the parties and there is "widespread policy agreement" within a party (Rohde 1991, 91; also see Aldrich and Rohde 2001, Smith and Gamm 2001, and Aldrich 2011). Although Southern Democrats did not (for the most part) join with Republicans to pass items on their own agenda, these two groups often joined together to kill proposals supported by the majority of Democrats (Polsby 2004, 11).[3] As political polarization increased, the party became more homogenous over the next several decades and Democratic victory on the floor became increasingly frequent (Rohde 2001, 159). Providing a different view of party influence in Congress, Cox and McCubbins (1993 and 2005) conceptualize congressional parties as acting like a cartel with the ability to control the agenda and thus determine what is voted on in Congress. In terms of negative agenda power—that is, preventing legislation that is strongly opposed from receiving a vote—Cox and McCubbins (2005, 28-29) note, even during the mid-

[3] In addition, one can reasonably assume that some proposals in this time period supported by the majority of Democrats were not offered as a result of almost assured failure on the floor.

20th century when there were a substantial number of conservative southern Democrats in Congress, there is little evidence of this group siding with Republicans to pass an agenda. Indeed, the final majority party roll rate—that is, where a majority of the majority party is on the losing side of a bill that passes— during this time period closely approximates that in other periods (Cox and McCubbins 2005, 92-93).

Although the number of final passage majority party rolls has remained relatively constant over time, the number of final passage minority party rolls almost tripled from an average of 15.5 rolls per Congress (an average of 20.1 percent of all final passage votes per Congress or 16.8 percent of all votes in this time period) from 1951-1975 (82nd-93th Congress) to an average of 43.6 rolls (an average of 32.7 percent of final passage votes per Congress or 31.6 percent of all votes in this time period) from 1975-1999 (94th-105th Congress) based upon data presented by Cox and McCubbins (2005, 92-93).[4] This increase in final passage minority party rolls as polarization between the parties increased and heterogeneity within the parties decreased shows that being in the minority became increasingly costly in the latter part of the 20th century. During this time period, the minority party was unable to advance their own agenda in the earlier time period, but they also did not face the frequent passage of legislation they objected to, which the higher roll rate in the later time period implies later became the case. Thus, as parties become increasingly distant from one another, not only does being in the majority confer benefits, but being in the minority seems to become costly as the other party pursues its own, far different agenda to the exclusion of the other party's preferred policies. Furthermore, according to Lee

[4] A final passage minority party roll is when a final passage vote passes and a majority of the minority party voted against the bill. Roll rates per Congress calculated using data presented by Cox and McCubbins. The division between the two time periods was chosen so as to be equal for both.

(2009), the recent rise in parties acting like teams has gone beyond ideological issues as parties have come to oppose one another even on non-ideological issues.

Even in an individualistic, consensus-based legislative institution like the U.S. Senate, polarization plays a role in the majority's ability to achieve their desired policy goals. Den Hartog and Monroe (2011) posit that the majority party has more influence in the Senate because they pay lower agenda consideration costs to have their desired policy proposals considered due to a series of procedural advantages. Pearson (2008) also finds an increase in party loyalty in the Senate, both in terms of voting loyalty and fundraising for the party. Pearson notes that although Senate leaders have weaker mechanisms for party control than the House, they do have the potential to use committee assignments and chairmanships as a mechanism for inducing party discipline. Smith (2012 and 2014) has written about the development of what he refers to as the "Senate Syndrome," a pattern of dysfunction in the modern Senate resulting from the collision of increased partisanship and longstanding procedural rules. Senate Democrats were, however, able to use the so-called "nuclear option" so that a sixty vote threshold was no longer needed for Executive Branch appointees and non-Supreme Court judicial nominees, demonstrating the potential power of a unified majority to enact its will even in this traditionally individualistic and consensual chamber.

While Heberlig and Larson (2012) use theories of party government—especially Cox and McCubbins's (1993 and 2005) party cartel model— to explain the rise of redistribution of campaign dollars in the House, the rise in polarization remains largely separate from previous discussions of the electoral implications of chamber competitiveness (but see Roberts, Smith, and Treul 2016). As the research discussed in the previous few paragraphs shows, what it means to be a minority or majority member has the potential to change over time as a result of the level

of polarization in an institution. Therefore, it follows naturally to consider not only the competitiveness of a chamber majority, but also the extent to which that legislative body is polarized when examining how institution-level factors have the potential to affect the decisions of political actors.

Scholars have developed formulas to examine how political actors make decisions, although these studies tend to focus on factors relating only to that particular political actor. As this study does not dispute the role of these considerations, but rather posits that additional, institution-level considerations also play a role in the decision-making process, previous studies on political decision-making serve as a crucial starting-point for my theory. In the classic formula given for political decision making given as $R= p\ (B) – C +D$, p relates to that political actor's own prospects for success and B relates to the personal benefits he or she derives from achieving that goal (Riker and Ordeshook 1968). Black (1972) extends this formula to the decision to run for office, focusing on the potential benefits, costs, and the probability of winning for individual candidates. Going a step further, Rohde (1979) examines progressive ambition—the desire to win a more a prominent elective office—among officeholders. While this theory adds the consideration not only of *whether* to run for office, but *which* office to run for, the central consideration for a political actors is whether he or she is likely to win elective office. Aldrich and Bianco (1992) also build off of Riker and Ordeshook's formula, examining prospective candidate's decision to join a particular political party. As Aldrich and Bianco (1992, 105) note, at the center of this theory is "the assumption of (pure) office-seeking ambition." Like previous studies, the focus of political actors' decision-making process is the individual goal of achieving elected office.

The same logic is present in a variety of studies of the behavior of political actors; famously, Mayhew (1974) posited that reelection was the proximate goal for members of Congress. For Mayhew, running for Congress was an individual endeavor as Mayhew (1974, 27) declared that "no theoretical treatment of the United States Congress that posits parties as analytic units will go very far." Even past studies that include a role for parties still tend to focus on the goal of winning as resulting in personal benefit for that member of Congress rather than the party as a whole. For example, Jacobson and Kernell (1983) examine how potential candidates respond to national conditions such as the state of economy and presidential approval when making decisions on whether to run for office. While these factors relate to the popularity of a particular party at a given point in time, candidates from a particular party run because of how it affects their individual prospects of success and because they derive some sort of individual benefit from winning a seat in Congress. Written in the pre-1994 world, majority control is presupposed to remain with Democrats in congressional elections literature written in this time period.

Some studies conducted after the 1994 election have given closer attention to how candidate decisions to run for office benefit a party as a whole. When looking at the decision to run for office, Maestas et al. (2006) conduct a national study and, among other factors, find that state legislators who are contacted by the party, and thus given the signal that the party has a commitment to winning their district are likely to have more ambition to run for Congress than those legislators who were not contacted by the party. Although parties surely want as many of their candidates as possible to win, resources are scarce, which forces parties to prioritize those seats that they are most likely to win so as to maximize their chances of winning the majority. Similarly, Carsey and Berry (2014) posit that parties act to prioritize their chances of winning

when recruiting candidates to run for state legislature. Parties want to nominate the strongest possible candidate to run for office, but when this is not possible, these authors suggest that a party tries to recruit a "sacrificial lamb" so as to maintain a presence in the district, perhaps setting them up for success in the future. Although these studies pay closer attention to the goals of the party than previous research, the focus is on that party's prospects for winning an individual seat, rather than their overall prospects for winning the majority in a particular election. These studies do, however, provide a good starting point for examining how chamber competitiveness and political polarization affect the battle for majority control of legislative institutions.

Plan of the Dissertation

In this dissertation I develop and test a theory of chamber competitiveness, polarization, and the decision-making process for political actors in legislative bodies at the national and state level in the United States. In the second chapter, I theorize that political actors take into account the extent to which a chamber is competitive and the ideological benefits of their party assuming majority status when making a range of politically-relevant decisions. In the third chapter, I test this theory's expectations for candidates based on the expectation that high-quality potential candidates are more likely to run for office when chamber competitiveness and polarization are high. For minority party potential candidates, however, the intersection of high levels of polarization and low levels of competitiveness is likely to be a deterrent from seeking office due to the prospect of constantly being outvoted, while at the same time their party's prospects for their party assuming majority party status are poor. In the fourth chapter, I examine how chamber competitiveness and polarization affect parties, positing that parties are more likely to engage in candidate recruitment and fundraising efforts when the levels of these two factors are

high, but that high levels of polarization in the face of low competitiveness presents a challenge for the minority party in an institution. In the fifth chapter, I examine how chamber competitiveness and polarization affect the decisions of incumbent legislators. Analogous to prospective candidates, I expect that legislators in highly polarized but uncompetitive legislatures who serve in the minority party are likely to view service in that legislature as unattractive and look for other opportunities for public service or may simply retire altogether. I also expect that increased levels of chamber competitiveness and polarization increases members' willingness to contribute to party fundraising efforts. Finally, I conclude by placing the results of this dissertation in a broader context and discuss implications for democratic government.

CHAPTER 2: A THEORY OF CHAMBER COMPETITIVENESS POLITICAL POLARIZATION, AND THE BATTLE FOR MAJORITY CONTROL OF LEGISLATURES

A candidate's decision to run or not run can benefit or undermine his or her party's standing in a particular district or state and ultimately, based on the overall outcome of the election, swing the direction of policymaking in one direction or the other. In the same vein, the decision of a political party about whether to get involved in a particular race and, after making this decision, the degree to which they are willing to invest resources, also has the potential to affect elections and the subsequent policy-making that takes place. Thus, an examination of political decision-making is one that is crucial to understanding the entirety of democratic government.

In this chapter, I put forward a modified theory of political decision-making, arguing that institution-level factors also have the potential to affect the behavior of political actors. I do not reject individual-level considerations that affect political decision making, but rather argue that there are additional factors that political actors take into account. Specifically, I posit that, in addition to their own probability of winning and the subsequent benefits of success, political actors may take into account the party's probability and benefit of success (i.e. winning majority control of a legislative chamber), which can be thought of in terms of the competitiveness of the chamber majority and the level of polarization in that legislative chamber. While other scholars (e.g. Jacobson and Kernell 1983, Jacobson 1989) have examined how national conditions affect the candidates' decisions to run for office, their studies focus on candidate's individual success as the impetus for the decision to run for office. Unlike those studies, this study focuses on a

party's prospects for majority control in a political institution as a factor in candidates' decision-making processes (as well as those of parties and incumbent officeholders). Although these two outcomes relate to one another, they are not always the same as a party deep in the minority might have a good year for individual candidates even as they fall short of an overall majority (e.g. the Republican Party in an array of elections from 1954-1992). The theory presented in this dissertation applies to the contemporary U.S. Congress, but also extends to the pre-World War II U.S. House, the U.S. Senate (1914-2014), and state legislatures. One qualification of this theory is that the effect of chamber competitiveness and polarization may be slightly more modest in the context of the Senate because it is a more consensus-based body. Nevertheless, I expect to find a relationship between these variables and the behavior of political actors in the context of the Senate. As demonstrated by the failed nomination of Merrick Garland, majority party status still carries some importance in the context of the U.S. Senate.

A theory for how chamber competitiveness and polarization affect political actors can be built from the individual-focused theory of Riker and Ordeshook (1968). To review, in the formula $R=p(B)-C+D$, R represents the utility of a political action, p represents the probability of success, B represents the benefit of achieving a political outcome, C represents the costs of engaging in that action, and D represents considerations relating to civic duty. As discussed previously, these variables are specific to the political actor; in other words, p can be thought of as $p_{individual}$, B can be thought of as $B_{individual,}$ and C can be thought of as $C_{\text{individual}}$. While not a crucial part of the theory presented here, D remains untouched for the sake of consistency. Given this formula, a political actor's utility function can be conceptualized as $u(c_1, c_2, \pi_1, \pi_2)= (\pi_1*c_1) + (\pi_2*c_2)$ where, c_1 represents net benefits in a state of the world where the actor achieves his or her goal, c_2 represents net benefits in a state of the world where the actor does not achieve his or

her goal, π_1 represents the probability of achieving that goal, and π_2 (equal to $1-\pi_1$) represents the probability of not achieving that goal.

Building on this formula, I contend that an additional set of considerations related to the party that should be added to the Riker and Ordeshook formula to represent party-related considerations that political actors take into account when making political decisions. Specifically, I posit that a formula of political decision-making should also contain a *p* term related to the competitiveness of the chamber (p_{party}) and a *B* term related to the benefits of serving in the majority (B_{party}). Technically speaking, there should also be a *C* term related to the costs to the party of a candidate running (C_{party}). While the potential exists for a political actor to take a specific action that has negative overall effects on the entire party (e.g. the potential candidacy of controversial Talk Show Host and former Cincinnati Mayor Jerry Springer for one of Ohio's U.S. Senate seats in 2004), this kind of scenario is unlikely. Furthermore, even if such negative effects take place, they would be hard to anticipate before taking such an action.[5] The *D* term remains untouched. Thus, I present the revised formula $R= p_{individual.}(B_{individual})-C_{individual} + p_{party}(B_{party})- C_{party} + D$, but, as the individual-related terms have already been examined in the literature, I focus on the party-related terms p_{party} and $B_{party.}$ In terms of party-related factors, I posit that political actors have a utility function related to party success, which can be represented as $u(c_{1party}, c_{2party}, \pi_{1party}, \pi_{2party})= (\pi_{1party}*c_{1party}) + (\pi_{2party}*c_{2party})$, where c_{1party} represents net benefits in a state of the world where the candidate's party wins the majority, c_{2party} represents net benefits in a state of the world where the candidate's party loses the

[5] For example, Rep. Todd Akin's (R-MO) "legitimate rape" comments in the 2012 Missouri U.S. Senate election may have given Democratic candidates around the country the ability to focus attention on the "war on women" Democrats alleged was being waged by Republicans. However, even the campaign of Akin's Democratic opponent, U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO) which engaged in specific efforts to help Akin become the GOP nominee because they thought he would be the easiest candidate to defeat, did not anticipate that turn of events (McCaskill 2015).

majority, π_{1party} represents the probability of the party winning the majority, and π_{2party} (equal to 1-π_{1party}) represents the probability of the candidate's party not winning the majority. This utility function, combined with the previously-presented individual-based utility function, can be used to calculate the total utility (individual and party based) that a political actor receives from taking a particular action.

Prospective Candidates

Applying this theory to the specific context of legislative elections, I posit that high-quality potential candidates, in addition to considering their own benefits and probability of winning, also take into account the probability and benefit of their party winning the majority.[6] In keeping with Fenno (1978), Rohde (1991), and Cox and McCubbins (1993 and 2005), I assume that potential officeholders have a broader set of goals than simply winning and remaining in political office. This theory applies specifically to high-quality candidates because these individuals are likely to be recruited to run for winnable seats by the party (Maestas et al. 2006; Carsey and Berry 2014) and because, even apart from party recruitment efforts, these individuals are more likely to have a heightened sense of shared fate with their party than are other potential candidates. While sacrificial lamb candidates are (at best) given tacit approval to run by their party (and then promptly ignored), high-quality candidates are likely to be more connected and feel a heightened sense of investment in the success of their party.[7] Furthermore, high-quality candidates with previous experience in elective office are likely to know that success or failure of their policy goals is strongly related to their party's electoral outcomes. To

[6] Note: I use Jacobson's (1989) definition of high-quality candidates being those who have previously won political office in this dissertation. This definition has also been used in studies of the historic Congress (e.g. Carson and Roberts 2013) and more recent updates by Jacobson (2013).

[7] For example, a low-quality candidate for state legislature who suddenly looked like he/she could potentially win due to a brewing political wave expressed to me that he/she would not owe his party much fealty if he/she won due to the party's lack of investment in this race.

an even greater degree under conditions of high polarization, this prior experience is likely to make these potential candidates acutely aware of the fact that the goal of "good public policy" [as Fenno (1978) puts it] relates to the overall electoral success of the party.

I theorize that a growth in chamber competition increases the likelihood that high-quality potential candidates will run for office because of the potential for any conceivably competitive seat to swing the majority from one party to another. While it may seem to be an overstatement to say that the majority may hinge on a single seat, numerous examples exist in history where legislative majorities have been decided based upon this scenario (e.g. U.S. Senate 2001-2003 and 2007-09, VA State Senate 2011-present, Colorado Senate 2015-17, among others). High-quality candidates are likely to be cognizant of this reality when running for a higher office; in some cases they may have served in a different legislative body where majority control was determined by a single seat or have friends or acquaintances who served in a legislature under these conditions. In addition, such individuals are likely to be among those with the highest levels of political knowledge; if a legislature has the potential to flip from one party to the other, these potential candidates are likely to know about it.

To have political knowledge is one thing, but to act on it is another. Based on the increased sense of shared fate these potential candidates have with their party, when given the opportunity to increase their party's potential of winning majority control of a legislative body, they may feel a sense of responsibility to run for a legislative seat, should their party have a credible chance of winning it in the next election. This is not to say that these potential candidates are altruistic, but simply that the entwinement of their goals with the fate of the party may prompt them to run given these conditions. In some cases, a low-quality candidate may still run when a high-quality candidate runs for a seat, but these low-quality candidates are likely to

lose in the primary; indeed, Banks and Kiewiet (1989) show that these sorts of candidates actually stand the best chance of winning by challenging a seemingly-safe incumbent and hoping for a break in the general election.

Furthermore, high-quality candidates are more likely to be recruited to run by their respective party (see Maestas et al. 2006 and Carsey and Berry 2014). While recruitment is not discussed specifically until later in this chapter, it relates directly back to a willingness to run for office. In other words, a high-quality candidate is more likely to be receptive to their party's call to run for office under conditions of high chamber competitiveness than is a low-quality candidate due to their existing linkages with the party. To use a counterexample, if a political party called a famous individual who previously had few connections to partisan politics but clearly identified with one of the parties, the fact that a particular legislative seat might swing majority control is unlikely to be a particularly potent motivator.[8] In contrast, a prospective high-quality candidate (under the Jacobson 1989 definition) should care that a particular seat might determine majority control and thus is more likely to be receptive to party recruitment efforts.

Political polarization has the potential to affect candidates' decisions about whether to run for office due to the heighted stakes of electoral outcomes for subsequent policymaking. Beyond a legislature simply being competitive or non-competitive, political polarization makes it especially worthwhile to have a legislative majority and costly to be consigned to the minority. Although being in the majority, regardless of polarization (Cox and McCubbins 1993 and 2005) provides for negative agenda control, conditions of high political polarization allow for positive agenda control. Drawing on data provided by Cox and McCubbins (2005, 92-93), the majority party final passage roll rate, where a majority of the majority party votes against a bill that

[8] For example, Jeopardy Star Ken Jennings was approached by Democratic Party leaders in 2004 to run for the U.S. Senate seat held by Sen. Orrin Hatch (D-UT); he immediately turned down the request (Krueger 2011).

passes, varied little over the second half of the 20th century as polarization rose. In contrast, the minority party final passage roll rate, which measures the rate at which the majority of the minority party votes against a bill that passes, increased from 20.1 percent of all final passage votes from 1951-1974 to 32.7 percent of final passage votes between 1975 and 1999. Thus, as polarization rose over time, the passage of legislation increasingly became more of a zero-sum game where winning for the majority party meant losing for the minority party (see Lee 2016).

One potential criticism of this theory about the role of polarization is that conditions of divided government are often present in the United States. Based on this line of criticism, all that comes of divided government in recent years has been gridlock (but see Mayhew 1991); thus, why would a potential candidate be prompted to run for office based on the rise of polarization? The short periods of time in which unified government has been in place under conditions of high polarization provide an answer to that question. For example, under unified government during the George W. Bush Presidency, Republicans passed two rounds of tax cuts, CAFTA, and a prescription drug benefit, among other policies, with most Democrats voting in opposition. Similarly, during the two years of unified government during the Obama administration, the Affordable Care Act, the stimulus package, financial reform, the repeal of "Don't Ask Don't Tell," and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act all passed (and ultimately became law) over overwhelming Republican opposition. With these examples in mind, polarization prompts high-quality potential candidates from the party that does not hold the presidency to run for office to prevent the other party from passing policy under unified government. For example, Republicans in recent years have been disappointed that they have not been able to advance more of their policy goals. However, Republicans would have been even unhappier had a unified Democratic government been able to pass immigration reform, climate change legislation, and an array of

other policies the majority of their party would have opposed. Thus, polarization serves as an impetus for high-quality potential candidates to run for office because of the increased stakes of making policy when their party enjoys unified control and blocking the policy goals of the other party by preventing that party from having unified control.

As with chamber competitiveness, however, increased polarization will not necessarily draw strong candidates to run for office in every legislative seat held by the other party that is up for election. As noted by Levendusky (2009), political polarization tends to lead to mass sorting, where liberal voters align with the Democratic Party and conservative voters align with the Republican Party. As a result, only those seats that are relatively balanced between the two parties are likely to feature high levels of electoral competition. Polarization, therefore, is likely to increase the likelihood that a high-quality potential candidate will run for office in relatively evenly divided seats, but is likely to have the opposite effect in seats that lean heavily toward one party or the other as high-quality potential candidates understand the long odds they face for wining that seat.

Consequently, stemming from this theory are the following hypotheses:

H1.1: As chamber competitiveness increases, the likelihood that a high-quality candidate will run for a potentially competitive seat held by the other party increases.

H1.2: As polarization increases, the likelihood that a high-quality candidate will run for a potentially competitive seat held by the other party increases.

Heightened political polarization also has the potential to make some candidates less likely to seek political office when a legislative majority is not competitive. Generally speaking, it is difficult for minority party lawmakers to advance their preferred policies. Instead, minority party lawmakers spend most of their time fighting losing battles against policy proposals from

the majority party. After almost forty years of his party serving in the minority, Representative Bill Gradison (R-OH) summed up life in the minority party by noting that "the sense of being in the minority is being left out" (Connelly and Pitney 1994, 5). For a high-quality potential candidate, the knowledge that their party has poor prospects for winning the majority in the next election is likely to make running for office seem less desirable. Although the individual-level considerations put forth by Mayhew (1974, among others), may be enough for some high-quality potential candidates to run for office, the percentage of high-quality potential candidates who run is likely to be lower than under conditions of high chamber competitiveness. Returning to the formula presented earlier in this dissertation on candidate's decision-making process in running for office, the potential for misery in a condition of high polarization and low competitiveness has the potential to increase the value of $C_{individual,}$ thus making potential candidates less likely to run for office.

While this theory relies on a characterization of members of Congress as a group up to this point, an individual basis exists in psychology for why one seeks to avoid situations where he or she is frequently on the losing side as is the case for minority party legislators in polarized legislative bodies. According to Robertson (2012), winning has positive effects on neurotransmitters in the brain, particularly dopamine, which has been tied more broadly to individuals' levels of motivation (e.g. see Wise 2004, Morita et al. 2013). Overall, Robertson argues that winning has beneficial effects on mood and ultimately health, while losing can have the opposite effect (also see CBS Sunday Morning 2013). While members of Congress are often portrayed (and viewed by the public) as corrupt and immoral (e.g. Ornstein 2014, Dugan 2015), members of Congress are humans with strengths, weaknesses, and emotional reactions to the circumstances in which they find themselves (Benedetto 2006). Thus, a high-quality potential

candidate is likely to be deterred from running for office when his or her party is consigned to minority party status under conditions of high polarization because of the emotional reaction he or she has to the likelihood of losing (e.g. being outvoted on bills, not getting to even vote on one's own proposals) that is inherent to being in the minority under conditions of high polarization. As a result, the minority party struggles to field high-quality candidates under such conditions.

Based on this consideration, I offer an additional hypothesis:

H2: As the difference between polarization and chamber competitiveness (Polarization-Chamber Competitiveness) increases, the likelihood that a high-quality minority party candidate runs for a seat held by the other party decreases.

This theory of how chamber competitiveness and polarization affect decision-making in the context of potential candidates is also expressed in tabular format below:

Table 2.1: Four Scenarios of Chamber Competitiveness, Polarization, & Candidate Actions

	Competitive Chamber Majority	Uncompetitive Chamber Majority
Polarized Chamber	(1) Narrow, but predictable set of potentially competitive seats related to national competitiveness; high-quality candidate from out-party for that seat likely to run in competitive seats. (e.g. Modern Senate; House 1994-2010)	(2) Narrow, but predictable set of potentially competitive seats related to national competitiveness; more seats are left on the table by minority party due to persistent majority status for a party. (e.g. Many modern state legislative bodies including NC)
Less Polarized Chamber	(3)Wide range of potentially competitive seats but some left on the table due to less being at stake (policy-wise) based upon holding majority; largely candidate-centric. (e.g. House in late 1940s and early 1950s.)	(4)Wide range of potentially competitive seats, large percentage of potentially vulnerable incumbents left uncontested and fewer potentially competitive open seats feature high-quality candidates from both parties; completely candidate-centric. (e.g. 1970s House)

Political Parties

As with candidates, I theorize that chamber competitiveness and political polarization affect a party's decision on whether to get involved in races. Using Riker and Ordeshook's (1968) formula for political decision making, one can examine the extent to which a party gets involved in the battle for majority control of a legislative body. For this application of my theory, parties themselves are the political actors of focus. As a result, I make use of the original Riker-Ordeshook formula for calculating the utility of political action. Thus, the utility for a party's

decision of whether to get involved with a specific electoral contest can be calculated using the formula $R=p(B)-C+D$, where *R* represents a party's utility of getting involved in the fight for majority control, p represents the probability that their involvement will affect which party controls a legislative body, *B* represents the benefit of affecting the outcome of which party wins majority control, *C* represents the costs of involvement. As before, *D* is included to remain consistent with past research, but does not play a large role in this application of the theory. A party's utility function utility function can be conceptualized as $u(c1, c2, \pi1, \pi2)= (\pi1*c1) + (\pi2*c2)$ where, c_1 represents net benefits in a state of the world where the party wins majority control, *c2* represents net benefits in a state of the world where the party does not win majority control, $\pi1$ represents the probability of winning majority control, and $\pi2$ (equal to $1-\pi1$) represents the probability of not winning majority control.

As with candidates, *p* and *b* can be thought of in terms of chamber competitiveness and polarization. Based on the levels of these factors, I theorize that a party becomes more or less likely to become engaged in the battle for majority control of a legislative body. By engagement in the battle for legislative majority control, I focus on two specific actions: party efforts to recruit candidates to run for office and party committee spending in legislative elections.

Beginning with party recruitment efforts, I posit that such engagement in legislative elections places specific burdens on the party, meaning that *C* (the cost of involvement) has a non-trivial value. Indeed, attempts to recruit party-backed candidates to run for office are often met with resistance among local activists who feel that their will is being usurped by party bosses. For example, Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC) Chair Chuck Schumer's (D-NY) efforts to recruit candidates in 2006 met with opposition from local party activists. In response to Democratic recruitment efforts in 2006, one activist stated that he felt

that party leaders were “disenfranchising the voters” and that it was “like the backrooms [were] back, the smoke-filled rooms” (Thomma 2006).

A party is more likely to be willing to bear this cost of getting involved in races when their involvement has the potential to swing races that might be pivotal in determining which party controls the majority. Although dealing with party activists upset about the party meddling in a race, or members of Congress who do not want to spend hours every day on the phone raising money for their party is clearly unpleasant for party officials, these costs are well worth an increased chance of winning majority status in a legislative chamber. Additionally, party activists and members of Congress may be more likely to accept party involvement when a chamber majority is competitive. At the very least, party activists are unlikely to sit out an election and not vote if a legislative majority may be determined by a seat or two. As a result, the value of *C* is likely to be lower when legislative majorities are more competitive, also making parties more likely to engage in the competition for majority control.

Political polarization also makes a party more willing to bear the costs of getting involved in a race because more is at stake based on the outcome of an election. As with individual candidates, it is one thing to say that control of a majority is up for grabs, but another to say that it truly matters which party wins that majority. As with the theoretical framework for candidate decisions on running for office, I posit that benefits—and avoided costs— from majority control stem from the extent to which polarization exists in a chamber. There are benefits of majority control which exist even without high levels of polarization—nicer offices, chairmanships, and negative agenda control, to name a few—but especially in the absence of high levels of polarization, these benefits are less likely to justify the costs of getting involved in the battle for majority control. In contrast, when high levels of polarization are present, the potential upsides to

majority control and downsides to minority party status are readily apparent to a party. Like prospective candidates, parties are aware of the accomplishments that their party has achieved under unified control, but are also aware of the policy goals achieved by the other party when they have unified control. Consequently, parties feel an impulse to engage under conditions of high polarization both based on a hope that they will be able to achieve their own policy goals, but also as a result of the fear of what would happen if the other party is able to win majority control under conditions of unified government. Additionally, as with chamber competitiveness, higher levels of polarization also may make party activists and incumbent officeholders alike more willing to bear the costs of party involvement in legislative elections. When a majority is both competitive and polarized, activists understand not only that a single seat or two may determine majority control, but that there are clear policy consequences—either positive or negative—that flow from which party has control of a chamber.

In terms of candidate recruitment, the following set of hypotheses for parties follow from the above theory:

H3.1: As chamber competitiveness increases, the likelihood that a party committee attempts to recruit a candidate for a potentially competitive seat increases.

H3.2: As chamber polarization increases, the likelihood that a party committee attempts to recruit a candidate for a potentially competitive seat increases.

The minority party, however, is likely to encounter resistance in recruitment when political polarization is high and chamber competitiveness is low. Critical to a party's ability to convince a prospective candidate to run for office is a credible argument that these efforts could be determinative in majority control of the institution. Even if a legislative chamber is polarized, the fact that one's party is unlikely to win makes it more difficult to recruit candidates to run for

office. As noted previously, humans rationally avoid situations in which they constantly lose, creating an impediment for party's trying to convince prospective candidates to run for office. Seeing that a majority is out of reach, high-quality prospective candidates are more likely to rebuff party recruitment efforts under such conditions of prospective hardship.

Thus, I also hypothesize that:

H4: As the difference between chamber competitiveness and polarization (Polarization-Chamber Competitiveness) increases, the likelihood that a candidate recruited by the party committee for the minority party turns down the opportunity to run for that seat increases.

Party involvement in legislative elections also involves party campaign committees spending money to elect their preferred candidates. The amount of party spending during an election cycle is a function of donor giving to that party. I theorize that donor giving is likely to fluctuate based upon the level of chamber competitiveness and polarization of a legislative institution. As chamber competitiveness increases, parties are likely to be more receptive to party request for money due to the increased importance of their donation in determining which party holds the majority. At the same time, donors are also more likely to respond to party requests for donations under conditions of increased polarization because of the heighted policy stakes associated with majority control of that legislative institution.

Thus, given the assumption that real spending is a reflection of donor giving, the following hypotheses follow:

H5.1: As chamber competitiveness increases, the overall level of real spending by a party committee increases.

H5.2: As polarization increases, the overall level of real spending by a party committee increases.

A table displaying this theory's expectations of how political polarization and chamber competitiveness and political polarization are likely to affect political parties is below:

Table 2.2: Effect of Chamber Competitiveness and Polarization on Party Involvement and Fundraising

	Competitive Chamber Majority	Uncompetitive Chamber Majority
Highly Polarized Chamber	(1)Widespread party engagement, recruitment efforts in nationally competitive seats that are not currently held. Party-based fundraising efforts should be widespread. (e.g. Modern Senate; House 1996-2010)	(2) Same as scenario 1, except sometimes the minority party struggles to raise money/recruit candidates due to perpetual minority status. (e.g. Many modern state legislative bodies including NC)
Less Polarized Chamber	(3)Less party involvement in recruitment; Fewer party-directed fundraising efforts due to less being at stake (policy-wise) in winning majority. (e.g. Congress in late 1940s and early 1950s.)	(4) Smallest level of party-involvement in recruitment and directed fundraising efforts. (e.g. 1970s House)

Legislative Incumbents

Chamber competitiveness and political polarization also have the potential to affect the decisions made by sitting office holders. As with my theory for high-quality prospective candidates, I build off of the original Riker-Ordeshook (1968) utility function by including terms that relate only to individual considerations, as well as others that relate to broader, party-based calculations. Thus, as with prospective candidates, I present the formula for incumbent officeholders $R = p_{individual.}(B_{individual}) - C_{individual} + p_{party}(B_{party}) - C_{party} + D$.[9] As with prospective

[9] As before, *D* is included for the sake of consistency, but does not play a large role in the new theory presented in this chapter.

candidates, I theorize that incumbent legislators have an additional utility function, beyond that for personal gains, related to the prospects of the party which can be represented by $u(c_{1party}, c_{2party}, \pi_{1party}, \pi_{2party}) = (\pi_{1party} * c_{1party}) + (\pi_{2party} * c_{2party})$, where c_{1party} represents net benefits in a state of the world where the incumbent's party wins the majority, c_{2party} represents net benefits in a state of the world where the incumbent's party loses the majority, π_{1party} represents the probability of the party winning the majority, and π_{2party} (equal to $1-\pi_{1party}$) represents the probability of the incumbent's party not winning the majority. This utility function, combined with the traditional individual utility function presented at the start of this chapter, can be used to calculate the total utility (individual plus party-based) that an incumbent receives from taking a particular action.

Similar to potential high-quality candidates' decisions on whether to run, I posit that incumbent officeholders take chamber competitiveness and political polarization into account when they decide whether or not to seek reelection. The decision of whether to run for reelection or not is one of the most important that can be made by a legislator. Past research (e.g. Gelman and King 1990) has demonstrated that incumbents enjoy a built-in advantage over their challengers when seeking re-election. Furthermore, Mayhew (1974) notes that most members of Congress find their jobs to be worth keeping, and thus run for reelection. For other legislatures that also offer their members some level of salary and prestige, one can also assume that those legislators want to remain in that body. Given this assumption by Mayhew, the baseline for running for reelection is quite high, making it difficult to look at factors that one might consider as likely to *increase* a member's likelihood of running for reelection. Instead, I focus on a factor that I theorize makes service in Congress unattractive and, thus, make members more likely to retire.

Incumbent legislators who have served in highly polarized, uncompetitive legislatures have experienced the misery of minority party status in that legislative body, which may prompt them to decide to leave that legislative body. As with prospective candidates, the effect of constantly losing makes seemingly perpetual service in a polarized legislative body as party of the minority party caucus to be miserable as members see their policy positions lose both in committee and on the floor. Indeed, in most cases, minority party legislators are often not even allowed to bring legislation to the floor for a vote. Drawing on Robertson's (2012) finding that winning has positive health effects and losing has negative health effects, a rational actor such as an incumbent member of Congress should be more likely to retire under conditions of high polarization and low chamber competitiveness than they would be otherwise. This is not to say that all or even most members of Congress will retire under these circumstances, but for those members for whom the costs and benefits of continued service are already relatively balanced, service in a polarized, uncompetitive legislature may result in the costs of continued service outweighing the benefits. For example, when North Carolina State Senator Eleanor Kinnaird (D-23rd District) announced her retirement in the middle of her 9th term in the North Carolina State Senate in 2013, she cited her inability to get anything done and the fact that "17 years of [her] work [was being] dismantled" as the reason for her retirement (ABC11 2013). While Senator Kinnaird moved from the state legislature to the private sector, in other situations legislators may retire from that legislative body, but decide to attempt to win a different political office. For example, these legislators may seek an executive office, such as governor, or a different legislative institution where their party has better prospects of serving in the majority following the next election. Indeed, as noted in the introductory chapter, several Democrats serving in the minority in the House, including Reps. Ann Kirkpatrick (D-AZ) and Patrick Murphy (D-FL),

have decided to run for the U.S. Senate in 2016. As with prospective candidates, this pattern is least likely to be present among senators given the presence of the filibuster, giving the minority some say in the legislative process and is most likely to be present in state legislatures due to the wide array of non-competitive legislative bodies.

Reflecting these expectations is the following hypothesis:

H6: As the difference between polarization and chamber competitiveness (Polarization-Chamber Competitiveness) increases, the likelihood that member of the minority party retires increases.

In addition to deciding whether or not to seek reelection, incumbent officeholders also must consider whether or not to get involved in raising money for the party's efforts to win majority control of their respective legislative institution. All else equal, I assume that incumbent legislators view contributing to party fundraising efforts as an unpleasant task and will not engage in such efforts unless they have some sort of incentive to do so. I theorize that chamber competitiveness and polarization provide this incentive. Chamber competitiveness is likely to entice members to participate because of the potential for any seat to determine which party holds the majority. Taking into account the potential benefits that arise from being in the majority, legislators are more willing to accept the unpleasantness of party fundraising efforts if they understand that their contributions could be vital in the party's efforts to maintain or regain the majority. Additionally, increased political polarization should induce legislators to participate in party fundraising efforts due to the increased stakes associated with majority control. As polarization increases, members decide to put up with the misery associated with party fundraising because they understand that majority control is vital to advancing their policy goals and blocking the goals of the other party.

Based on the expectations presented in the above theory for how various factors affect an incumbent legislator's willingness to participate in party fundraising efforts are the following hypotheses:

H7.1: As chamber competitiveness increases, the level at which a member participates in party fundraising increases.

H7.2: As political polarization increases, the level at which a member participates in party fundraising increases.

Finally, minority party hardship is also likely to play a role in members' willingness to party fundraising efforts. Given the distaste that members feel towards party fundraising efforts, members are unlikely to engage in them if they feel they are a futile effort to win majority control, even when the stakes associated with majority control are high. Indeed, Connelly and Pitney (1994) noted that after decades of being in the minority party, Republicans were not "hungry for a majority" and that "other people's campaigns [were] not their first priority" (Ibid, 154).

Thus, I also hypothesize:

H8: As the difference between polarization and chamber competitiveness (Polarization-Chamber Competitiveness) increases, the level of contributions by the minority party decreases.

Below, in tabular form, is the theory presented above for incumbent legislators:

Table 2.3: Four Broad Scenarios of Chamber Competitiveness, Polarization and Incumbent Behavior

	Competitive Chamber Majority	Uncompetitive Chamber Majority
Polarized Chamber	(1) Specific group of incumbents (e.g. ideological extremists, committee/chamber leaders) likely to engage in fundraising efforts. (e.g. House 1994-2010)	(2) Higher than usual rate of retirement for minority party incumbents due to misery of serving in minority; also more difficultly for minority in getting minority legislators to contribute to party fundraising efforts. (e.g. pre-1994 House)
Less Polarized Chamber	(3) Less of an impetus to raise money for party than scenario 1, but also less of a reason for minority party incumbent to retire due to lack of polarization. (e.g. House in late 1940s and early 1950s.)	(4) Lowest rate of fundraising. Lack of polarization means that holding office is still attractive for individual reasons, so lower retirement rate than scenario 2 for minority party incumbents. (e.g. 1970s House)

In Summation

In total, chamber competitiveness and political polarization have the potential to affect the behavior of a wide range of political actors. In the subsequent chapters, I will test the hypotheses presented in this chapter in the context of potential candidate, parties, and incumbent legislators. When the data makes it possible, I also test these hypotheses in the context of the modern and historical U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate, and state legislatures in order to demonstrate the generalizability of this theory. I divide the above hypotheses into three chapters based on subject matter, with the next chapter focusing on candidates, the following chapter examining political parties, and the subsequent chapter investigating the role of chamber competitiveness and polarization on incumbent legislators.

CHAPTER 3: CHAMBER COMPETITIVENESS, POLITICAL POLARIZATION, AND CANDIDATE DECISIONS TO RUN FOR OFFICE,

Chamber competitiveness and polarization have the potential to affect a candidate's decision on whether to run for office. As presented in the previous chapter, I theorize that increases in chamber competitiveness and polarization are associated with a higher probability of high-quality potential candidates running for theoretically winnable seats in an array of legislative bodies. When legislative chambers are competitive, the knowledge that any marginal seat could make the difference in which party controls that chamber increases the probability that a quality candidate will run for that seat, while high polarization prompts quality candidates to run for office based on the knowledge of the high stakes (in terms of policy) of the election outcome for majority control of that legislative chamber. Finally, I also theorize that conditions of high polarization and low competitiveness create miserable conditions for the minority party in terms of passing favorable legislation and blocking unfavorable legislation, resulting in lower rates of quality candidates running for office.

In this chapter, I test this theory in the context of the post-World War II (1946-2014), as well as the pre-war (1872-1944) U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate (1914-2014), and state legislatures (2012 and 2014). First, I discuss how I construct the two key independent variables in this chapter, which measure chamber competitiveness and polarization. Second, I test the first set of hypotheses presented in the previous chapter, pertaining to the effect of chamber competitiveness and polarization on candidate decisions to run for potentially winnable seats. Third, I test the second hypothesis, relating to the effect of high polarization and low

competitiveness on minority party caucus decisions to run for a seat in a legislative body. Finally, I discuss the broader implications of these results and how they will be built upon in subsequent chapters.

Constructing a Measure of Competitiveness and Polarization

To construct the measure of chamber competitiveness used in this dissertation, I begin by constructing OLS models for each legislative chamber being examined that are similar to those commonly used to forecast congressional elections (e.g. Jacobson and Carson 2015). In their model of national congressional outcomes, Jacobson and Carson (2015, 187) include variables related to seat exposure, presidential approval, and the state of the economy to predict the number of seats won or lost by the president's party. Since a major focus of this dissertation is on parties obtaining enough seats to win majority control of legislative bodies, the dependent variable for the model of post-World War II House (1946-2014) outcomes is the percentage of seats won by the president's party in that year's congressional election. I include independent variables relating to each factor in the Jacobson and Carson model. To account for exposure, I include a measure of the number of seats held by the president's party going into the election, the approval measure is taken from the first Gallup Poll after May 1 of the election year, and the economy measure is the change in real disposable income from the second quarter the year before the election to the second quarter of the election year.[10] Finally, I also include a variable indicating whether it is a midterm election to account for the fact that the president's party tends to lose seats in midterm years (Campbell 1960).

[10] Economic data available from the St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank; for 1946, data is from the start of the year before the election to the start of the year of the election because quarterly data is not available. Gallup data from Gallup's Presidential Approval Center.

Several changes are made for the models relating to other legislative chambers. For the pre-War House, a measure of presidential approval is not available so there is not a measure of this factor the model. Consequently, since personal disposable income data is not available for this entire time period, the economic variable instead measures the yearly change in GDP.[11] For the Senate, I include the same independent variables, but modify the midterm variable so that it signifies when a midterm is the second for a president. As discussed by Mayhew (2014), a president's second midterm is likely to be far worse for them in the Senate than their first midterm due to the "Six-Year Itch." In order to examine competitiveness in Senate elections since 1914—the first election following the ratification of the 17th Amendment requiring the universal popular election of senators—it is necessary to construct an additional model without the presidential approval measure. As with the pre-War House model, this model makes use of yearly change in GDP as the economic variable; the other variables are the same as the post-War Senate model.

I use a final set of models to examine competitiveness at the state level in the 2012 and 2014 state legislative elections. These models, as with the pre-War House models and the Senate models, use the percentage of seats held by the president's party as the dependent variable because the total number of seats varies across state legislative bodies. For this model, the exposure variable measures the percentage of seats held by the president's party after the previous election (2010 or 2012), the approval measure is President Obama's average approval in that state as measured by Gallup in 2012 or 2014, and the economic variable is a state level

[11] Historic GDP data is available from the Maddison Project (The Maddison-Project, http://www.ggdc.net/maddison/maddison-project/home.htm, 2013 version)

measurement of the change in personal income at the end of the second quarter the year before the election (2011 or 2013) to the end of the second quarter in the election year (2012 or 2014).[12]

Table 3.1: Models of Legislative Outcomes

Variable	Post-WWII House (1946-2014)	Pre-WWII House (1872-1944)	Post-WWII Senate (1946-2014)	Pre-WWII Senate (1914-1946)	State Legislatures (2012)	State Legislatures (2014)
Previous Seats	0.778* (0.081)	0.871* (0.164)	0.737* (0.079)	0.990* (0.267)	0.789* (0.056)	0.825* (0.040)
Approval	0.123* (0.054)	-	0.072 (0.046)	-	0.541* (0.120)	0.344* (0.093)
State of Economy	1.095* (0.303)	0.498* (0.224)	1.094* (0.262)	0.187 (0.245)	0.110 (0.403)	0.810 (0.674)
Midterm[13]	-5.159* (6.245)	-11.944* (3.559)	-5.631* (1.512)	-5.544 (6.315)	-	-
Intercept	0.951 (4.884)	6.326* (8.389)	4.400 (4.650)	-1.862 (15.775)	-14.615* (4.912)	-16.918* (4.221)
Adjusted R^2	0.794	0.471	0.815	0.544	0.905	0.945
N	35	37	35	16	64	67

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures seats won in legislative election. Summary statistics for all models available upon request.

Once these models have been constructed, one can obtain predictions for the probability that the minority party will win the majority in the next election. Specifically, I use post-regression predicted values to obtain estimates of the probability that the president's party will win 50 percent or more of the seats in a particular legislative chamber. In elections where the

[12] Gallup approval data available at http://www.gallup.com/poll/160133/obama-gets-highest-2012-job-approval-hawaii.aspx and http://www.gallup.com/poll/181463/majorities-five-states-approved-obama-2014.aspx; economic data is available from the Bureau of Economic Analysis at www.bea.gov. Using approval ratings that come from the same survey research organization eliminates errors that would come from using survey data from different polling firms.

[13] For Senate, Six-Year Itch

president's party is the minority party in the legislative chamber, the value of this estimate serves as the measure of chamber competitiveness for that election. When the president's party is in the majority, I calculate the probability that the other party will win the majority in the legislative chamber. The charts below display how chamber competitiveness has fluctuated over time in different legislative institutions. In most cases, chamber competitiveness fluctuates substantially over time, although the House from 1954-2014 and state legislative bodies in both 2012 and 2014 are characterized by their lack of chamber competitiveness.

While this measure is somewhat more complicated than, for example, looking at size of a legislative majority, an advantage of this measure is that it takes into account both the level of seats for a party and the direction of the seat swing that is likely to take place in the next election. For an election such as 2008, where Democrats held a two seat majority in the Senate, looking only at seat level exaggerates the prospects of a flip in majority control since poor economic conditions presaged an expanded Democratic majority. Additionally, this measure correlates much more strongly with whether or not the majority actually flips in a legislative election. For the post-World War II House, the correlation between this measure and whether the House flips is 0.71 while the correlation between the size of the House majority and whether the House flips is -0.27. Similarly, my measure correlates more strongly with majority control flips for the pre-World War II House (0.49 vs. -0.02) Senate (0.66 vs. -0.29), and state legislative bodies in 2012 (0.71 vs. -0.32) and 2014 (0.75 vs. -0.32). As exogenous, one-time events have the potential to affect election outcomes, one would not necessarily want a measure of competitiveness to perfectly correlate with whether a majority flip occurs, but a good measure of competitiveness should still correlate well with changes in majority control of an institution.

Figure 3.1: House Chamber Competitiveness (1872-2014)

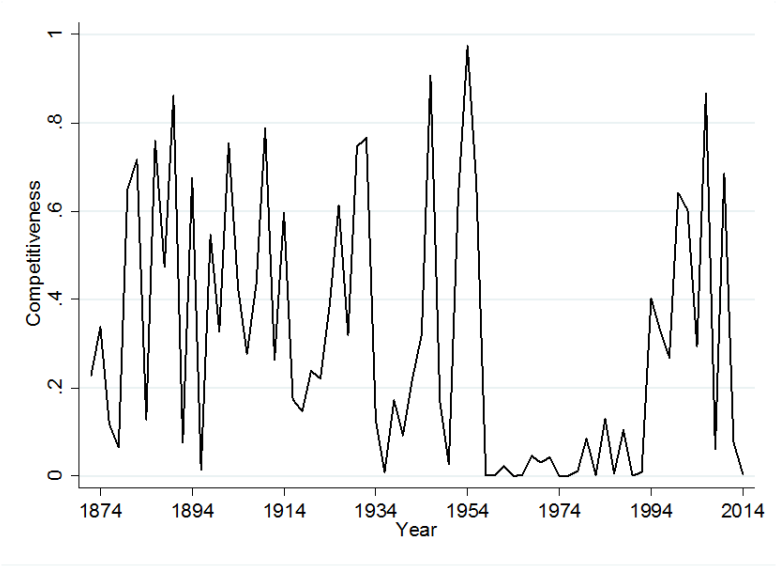


Figure 3.2: Senate Chamber Competitiveness (1914-2014)

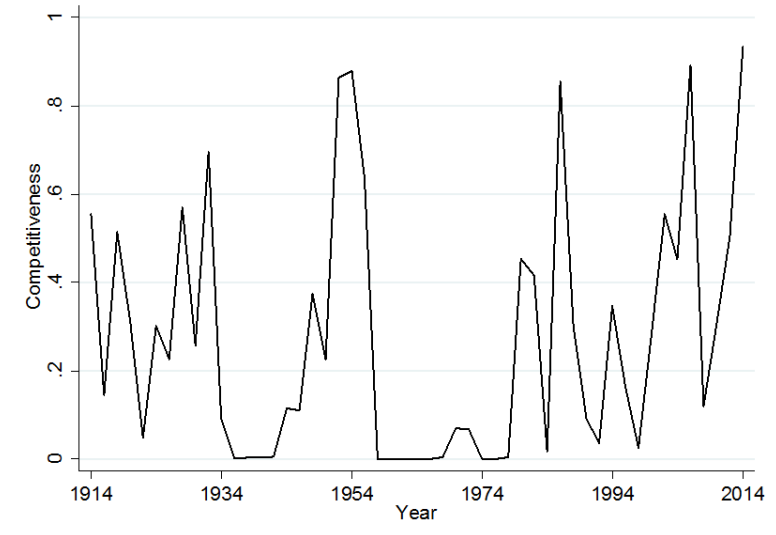


Figure 3.3: State Legislative Competitiveness (2012)

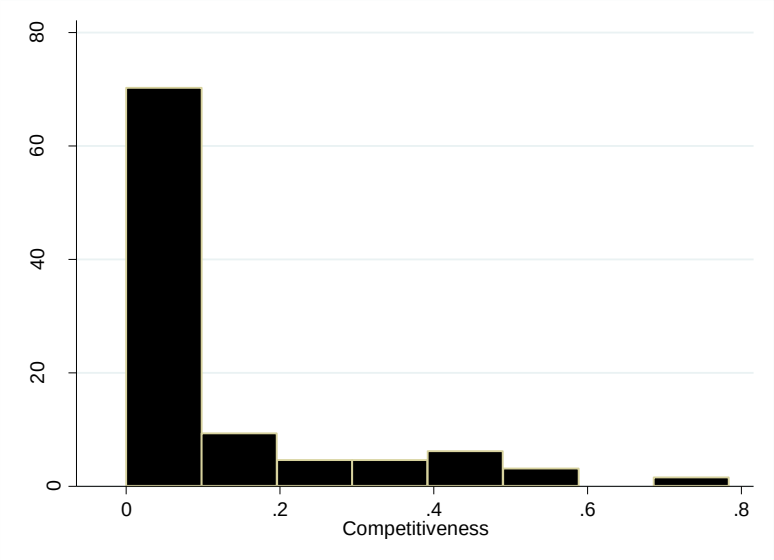
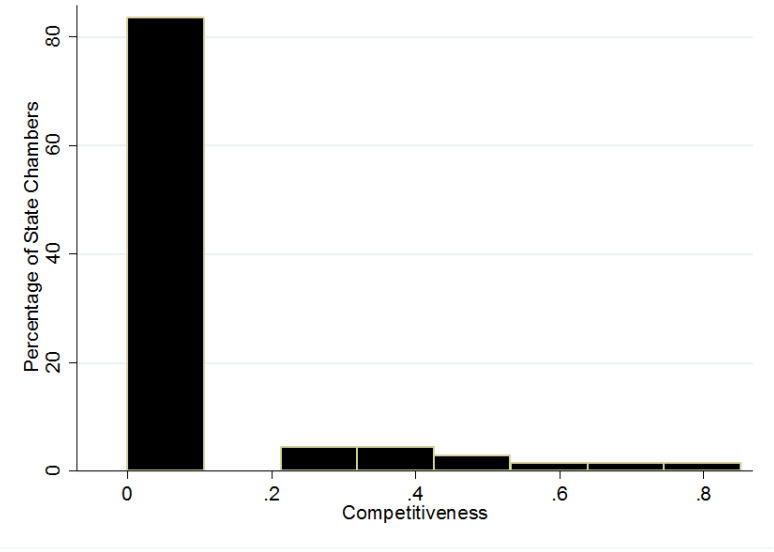


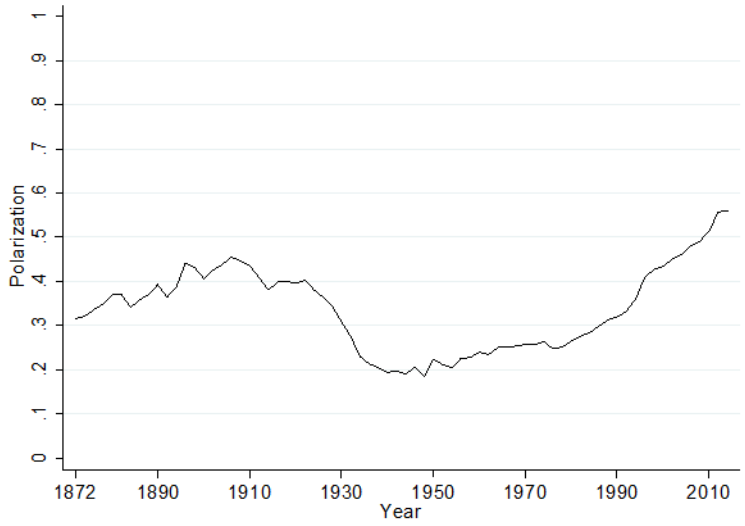
Figure 3.4: State Legislative Competitiveness (2014)



Next, I construct a measure of polarization by using of DW-Nominate scores for national institutions and McCarty-Shor scores for state legislatures. For the U.S. House and Senate, I measure polarization by calculating the absolute difference between the median Democratic member of a legislative body during a session of Congress and the median Republican during

that session. So that this measure is on the same scale as the chamber competitiveness measure, I divide this value by two. For state legislatures, I measure polarization using the difference in mean party ideology scores calculated by McCarty and Shor (2011).[14] This measurement is unbounded so I use the difference between the mean ideology score for each party in that legislative chamber. As such, this measurement of polarization in state legislatures is not comparable with the measurement of polarization for the House or Senate. The figures below display polarization over time for the House and Senate, as well as the distribution of polarization across state legislative chambers. As can be seen in these figures, polarization exhibits variability over time in the House and Senate and across state legislative bodies.

Figure 3.5: House Polarization (1872-2014)



[14] I use the mean for state legislatures due to the presence of some gaps in the McCarty-Shor data; thus, the median legislator may in fact not be the median some cases.

Figure 3.6: Senate Polarization (1914-2014)

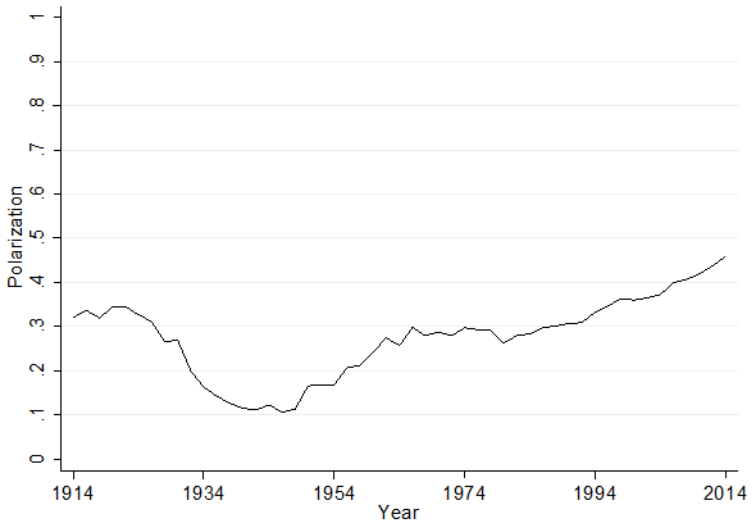


Figure 3.7: State Legislative Polarization (2012)

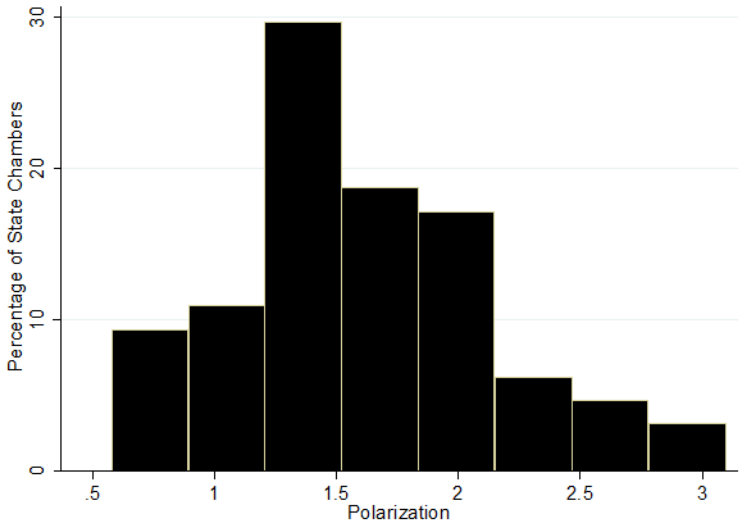
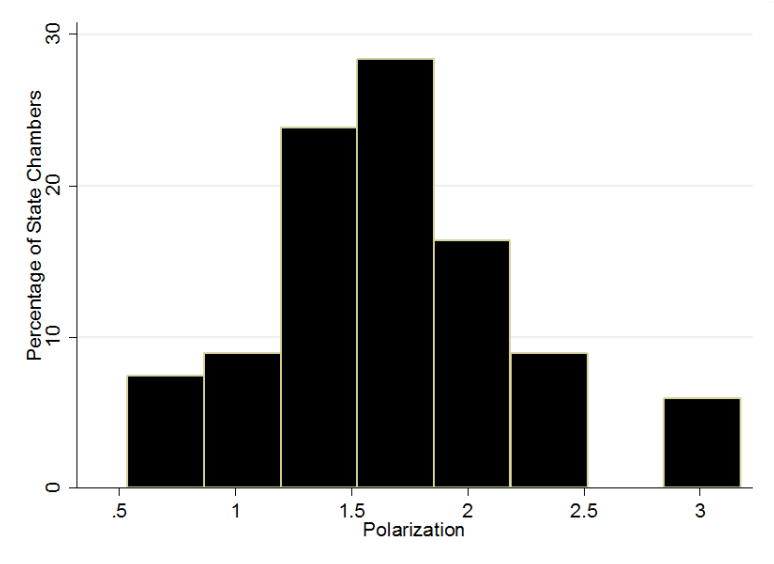


Figure 3.8: State Legislative Polarization (2014)



Chamber Competitiveness, Polarization, and Candidate Decisions to Run for Office

Following the construction of these measures of chamber competitiveness and polarization, it is now possible to test the first set of hypotheses. To review, the first in this set of hypotheses is that *as chamber competitiveness increases, the likelihood that a high-quality candidate will run for a potentially competitive seat held by the other party increases*; the second is that *as polarization increases, the likelihood that a high-quality candidate will run for a potentially competitive seat held by the other party increases*. I first test these hypotheses in the context of the post-World War II House of Representatives. The dependent variable for these logit models, candidate quality, is operationalized in the same manner as Jacobson (1989) and Carson and Roberts (2013). Chamber competitiveness and polarization are operationalized in the manner discussed in the previous section, while potential competition is operationalized in terms of the margin for the other party's presidential nominee in the most recent presidential election in that state or district, as compared to the national margin for the presidency.

An advantage of using presidential vote to operationalize potential competition is that, in nearly every case, the same two major party presidential candidates appear on the ballot in every state. It should be noted that, in some cases, the value of the margin variable is negative when a party holds a seat won by the other party's presidential candidate in the most recent election; as this variable increases, the level of potential competitiveness is a district decreases. Until after the 2010 election, at least ten percent of seats had fallen into this category in every election year since 1948. In addition to including chamber competitiveness, polarization, and margin in each model, interaction terms between competitiveness and margin and polarization and margin are included in each model in order to test the conditional relationships presented in hypotheses 1.1 and 1.2.

In addition to including these focal independent variables, I also include several control variables. I include a variable for the number of years since the out-party has held the majority, in keeping with Connelly and Pitney's (1994) observation that a sense existed among Republicans that it wasn't worth bothering to fight for the majority because the outcome was already predetermined in the years before the 1994 election. A dummy variable for whether or not governmental control at the national level is divided is also included as governmental control may be more valuable when a party has unified control. I also include dummy variables indicating whether a congressional seat is open, if the seat is held by a Republican before the election, whether the seat is a majority party seat, and whether the seat is located in the South.

Table 3.2: The Decision to Run for the Post-War U.S. House

Variable	Post World-War II House (1946-2014) Logit Model
Chamber Competitiveness	0.069
	(0.097)
Polarization	0.082
	(0.026)
Seat Lean Compared to Nation	-0.021*
	(0.008)
Chamber Competitiveness*Seat Lean Compared to Nation	-0.036*
	(0.009)
Polarization*Seat Lean Compared to Country	-0.115*
	(0.025)
Years Since Majority	-0.006*
	(0.002)
Divided Government	-0.033
	(0.049)
Open Seat	0.923*
	(0.064)
Majority Party Seat	-0.106*
	(0.050)
GOP Held Seat	0.355*
	(0.051)
Located in South	-0.899*
	(0.060)
Intercept	-0.954*
	(0.104)
N	14,189
Log-likelihood	-6504.435

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures if a high-quality candidate decides to run.

The results obtained for the post-World War II House are in keeping with my hypotheses. In this model, the interaction terms between competitiveness and margin and polarization and margin are significant. To better understand the effect of a variable in a model with interaction terms, however, it is useful to calculate marginal effects, which are displayed below in Figures 3.9 and 3.10.[15] One can observe that when the presidential margin of a district is favorable for the party not holding the seat, the probability of an out-party quality candidate running increases as chamber competitiveness increases. For example, for a post-War seat that was won by the out-party by 20 percentage points in the last presidential election, but is held by the president's party, the probability of recruiting a quality candidate increases from about 52 percent to about 69 percent as chamber competitiveness increases from 0 to 1. In contrast, when presidential margin is unfavorable for the party not holding the seat, there is a decreasing (or flat) probability that a high-quality candidate runs for that seat as chamber competitiveness increases.

A similar pattern is present for the marginal effect of polarization on the probability that an out-party quality candidate runs for a seat. As polarization increases, the probability that a quality candidate runs for the seat increases when presidential margin is favorable for the party not currently holding the seat, while it decreases (or is flat) when presidential margin is unfavorable for the out-party. For a seat won by the out-party by 20 percentage points in the most recent presidential election but held by the president's party would see the probability of a high-quality out-party presidential candidate running increase from about 40 percent to just over 60 percent as polarization increases from 0 to 0.5.[16] Several control variables also attain significance in this model. The variable measuring years since a party has been in the majority is

[15] All other variables set at means in calculation of marginal effects in these figures.

[16] Polarization exhibits a smaller variation than does chamber competitiveness, so it makes more sense to examine the marginal effect of competitiveness on candidate quality over a more narrow range.

significant, which is consistent with Connelly and Pitney's (1994) finding of disaffection among members of a seemingly-perpetual minority party. Other variables with a negative association with a high-quality candidate running include whether the seat is held by the majority and whether it is located in the South. In contrast, open seats and seats held by the majority party are more likely to feature high-quality candidates.

Figure 3.9: Marginal Effects Plot for Chamber Competitiveness in the Post-World War II House (1946-2014)

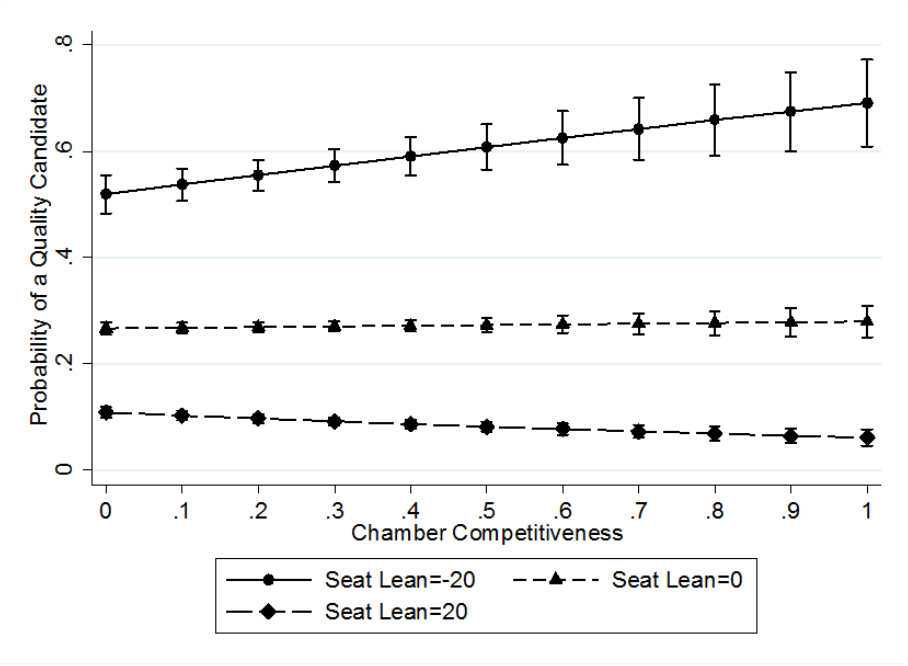
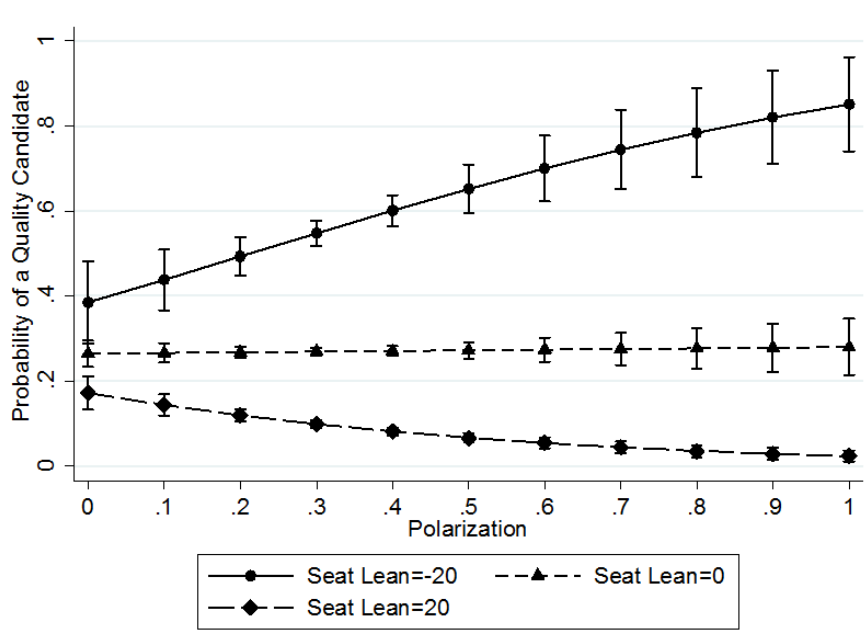


Figure 3.10: Marginal Effects Plot for Polarization in the Post-World War II House (1946-2014)



Next, I test these hypotheses for the pre-World War II U.S. House (1872-1944), the United States Senate since the direct election of senators, and state legislative elections in 2012 and 2014.[17] For these legislative bodies, the dependent variable is operationalized in the same manner as for the post-World War II U.S. House**,** where candidates who have previously won an elective office are considered high-quality.[18] Polarization and chamber competitiveness are measured as described in the previous section. However, to account for the fact that in some states (e.g. WV and WA) the party that was defeated in a landslide in the most recent presidential election is still competitive at the state legislative level, potential competition is operationalized in terms of the margin for the other party's presidential nominee in that legislative district, as

[17] This model excludes state legislative institutions that elect their members in multi-member districts; for several states, the McCarty-Shor measure of polarization or presidential vote at the legislative district level are not available for this year and thus those states are excluded from the model.

[18] A slight modification is made for a Senate model to create a scale of candidate quality; a discussion of this scale is discussed later in this section.

compared to the state margin for the other party's presidential candidate. The control variables in the pre-World War II House and Senate models are the same, while the two state legislative models include several variables not included in the federal models. These models include a variable indicating the level of legislative professionalism using the index developed by Squire (2007) and a dummy variable indicating whether the chamber is an upper or lower legislative chamber. To account for the fact that national electoral forces play a role in state legislative elections, these models also include a measure of margin for the other party's presidential nominee in the most recent presidential election in that district, as compared to the national margin for the presidency. Finally, to account for the role of racial polarization (particularly in the South) in recent years, I include a variable measuring the percentage of the state population that is African-American is included in these models.[19] It is important to note that states with a large African American population can be expected to experience a low levels of competition in both majority minority and non-majority minority districts due to high levels of racial polarization in voting (Lublin 1999).

[19] Due to the strong correlation between this variable and the South variable, the South Dummy is not included for these models.

Table 3.3: The Decision to Run for the Pre-War U.S. House

Variable	Pre-World War II House (1872-1944) Logit Model
Chamber Competitiveness	0.586*
	(0.110)
Polarization	1.059*
	(0.379)
Seat Lean Compared to Nation	-0.032*
	(0.010)
Chamber Competitiveness*Seat Lean Compared to Nation	-0.033*
	(0.010)
Polarization*Seat Lean Compared to Country	-0.063*
	(0.030)
Years Since Majority	-0.025*
	(0.006)
Divided Government	0.687*
	(0.061)
Open Seat	0.434*
	(0.054)
Majority Party Seat	-0.096*
	(0.049)
GOP Held Seat	-0.087
	(0.053)
Located in South	-0.334*
	(0.072)
Intercept	-1.020*
	(0.145)
N	10,673
Log-likelihood	-5532.767

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures if a high-quality candidate decides to run.

The results for the pre-World War II House are similar to those for the post-World War II, with both interaction terms again being negative and significant. Marginal effects plots (see Figures 3.11 & 3.12) also demonstrate the substantive effect of chamber competitiveness and polarization at various levels of potential competition. For example, for a pre-War seat that was won by the out-party by 20 percentage points in the last presidential election, but is held by the president's party, the probability of recruiting a quality candidate increases from just under 60 percent to about 80 percent as chamber competitiveness increases from 0 to 1 Additionally, a seat won by the out-party by 20 percentage points in the most recent presidential election but held by the president's party would see the probability of a high-quality out-party presidential candidate running increase from about 50 percent to about 75 percent as polarization increases from 0 to 0.5.

Figure 3.11: Marginal Effects Plot for Chamber Competitiveness in the Pre-World War II House (1872-1944)

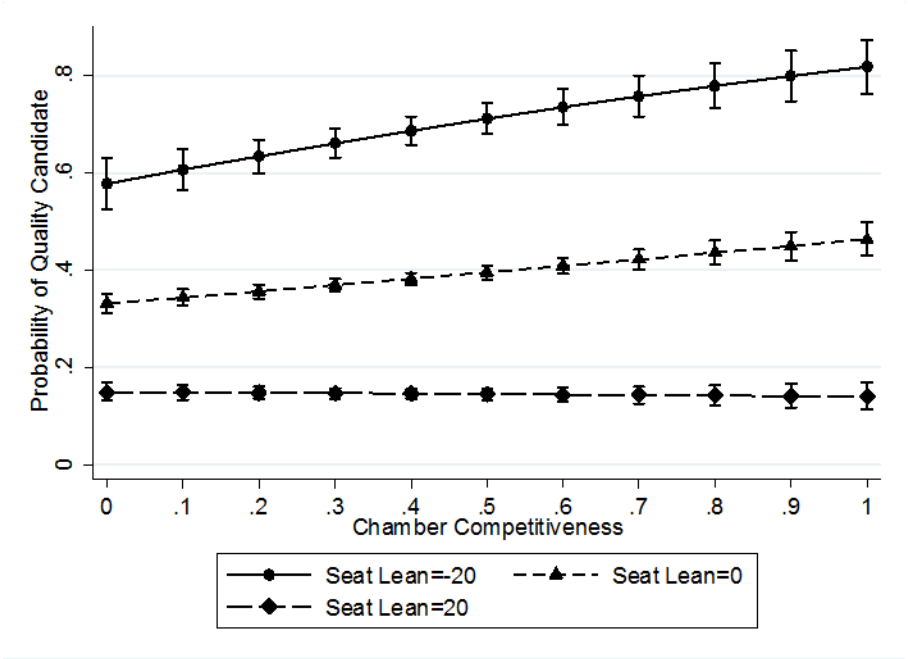
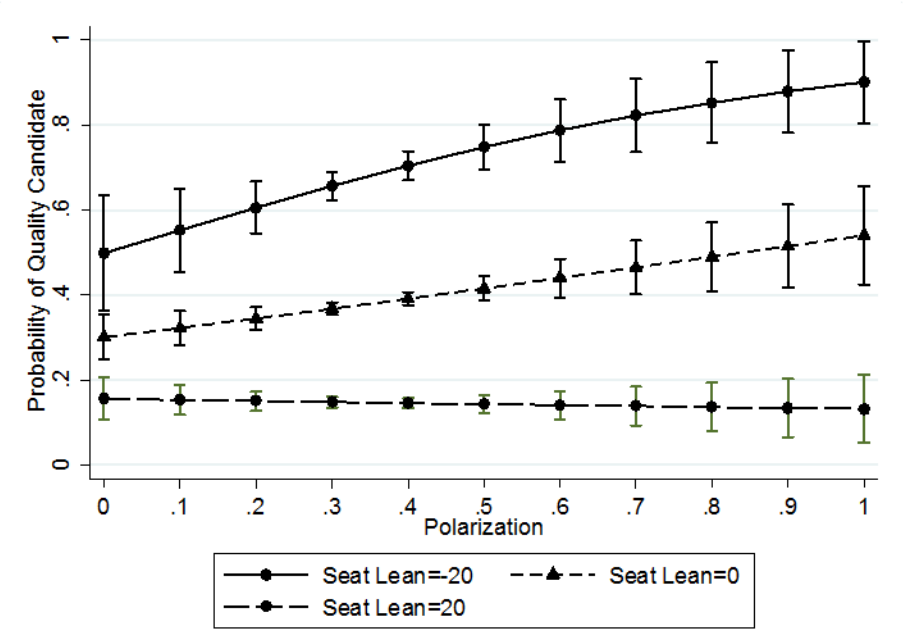


Figure 3.12: Marginal Effects Plot for Polarization in the Pre-World War II House (1872-1944)



Next, I test this hypothesis using data from U.S. Senate from 1914-2014.[20] In first use a three-tiered measure of candidate quality: out-party candidates who have won a statewide office, a seat in Congress, or a mayoral election in a city of a larger population than the mean congressional district are classified as the highest-quality candidates, candidates who have won another elective office are considered middle quality level, and those who have not won an election are set at the lowest quality level. However, Eaves (2012) found more complicated measures of Senate candidate quality tends not to produce different results than when one uses the simpler, dichotomous measure used in the House models. As such, I run models with both the three-tiered and two-tiered measure of candidate quality. The focal independent variables and control variables are the same in these model as the House models.

[20] Data collected from the Congressional Biographical Directory, Newspapers.com, and the Political Graveyard website, and Google searches.

Table 3.4: The Decision to Run for the U.S. Senate

Variable	Senate Logit Model (1914-2014)	Senate Ordered Logit Model (1914-2014)
Chamber Competitiveness	0.203	0.391*
	(0.216)	(0.191)
Polarization	0.424	0.266
	(1.422)	(0.625)
Seat Lean Compared to Country	-0.074*	-0.070*
	(0.022)	(0.020)
Chamber Competitiveness*State Lean Compared to Country	-0.051*	-0.067*
	(0.025)	(0.022)
Polarization*State Lean Compared to Country	0.102	0.096
	(0.075)	(0.068)
Years Since Majority	-0.001	-0.002
	(0.009)	(0.008)
Divided Government	0.012	
	(0.111)	
Open Seat	0.520*	0.645*
	(0.131)	(0.115)
Majority Party Seat	-0.153	-0.121
	(0.113)	(0.101)
GOP Held Seat	0.432*	0.373*
	(0.115)	(0.103)
Located in South	-0.904*	-0.819*
	(0.137)	(0.130)
Intercept	0.393	-
	(0.233)	
First Cut Point	-	-0.312
		(0.209)
Second Cut Point	-	0.759*
		(0.209)
N	1,752	1,752
Log-likelihood	-1065.432	-1720.022

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures if a high-quality candidate decides to run.

For the Senate, there is support for the hypothesis pertaining to competitiveness, but not for the hypothesis related to polarization. As most states are decided by a closer margin than many congressional districts, the relevant range of presidential margins to examine when looking at margin effects is narrower than for the House models. Marginal effects plots for the Senate logit model are presented below in Figures 3.13 and 3.14. There is an increasing marginal effect of chamber competitiveness on the probability that a high-quality candidate runs for the Senate when the state's presidential margin is favorable, while this effect is flat or decreasing when presidential margin is less favorable. For example, in a Senate seat where the presidential vote favored the party not currently holding the seat in the most recent presidential election by 10 percentage points, the probability that a high-quality Senate candidates runs increases from about 71 percent when chamber competitiveness is at 0 to about 82 percent when chamber competitiveness is at 1.0. In contrast, meaningful differences do not exist for the marginal effect of polarization across various levels of presidential margin. One potential explanation for this result could be the fact that the Senate tends to be less polarized than the House, thereby causing this measure to remain within a smaller area. If Senate polarization continues to rise in the coming decades, perhaps more high-quality potential Senate candidates in potentially competitive states will begin to believe that majority control of the Senate is important and will subsequently run for the Senate. Additionally, as discussed in the previous chapter, the presence of counter-majoritarian institutions such as the filibuster may be an explanation for this result. However, if the Senate continues to chip away at the filibuster and therefore becomes a more majoritarian body, majority control may also become of greater concern for high-quality potential candidates.

For control variables in the Senate model, as with both House models, the open seat measure is significant and positive, which is again consistent with expectations. The only other control variables which attain significance in either model are the Republican seat dummy variable, which attains positive significance, and the South dummy variable, which is negative. Other control variables do not reach significance in either model.

Figure 3.13: Marginal Effects Plot for Chamber Competitiveness in Senate (1914-2014)

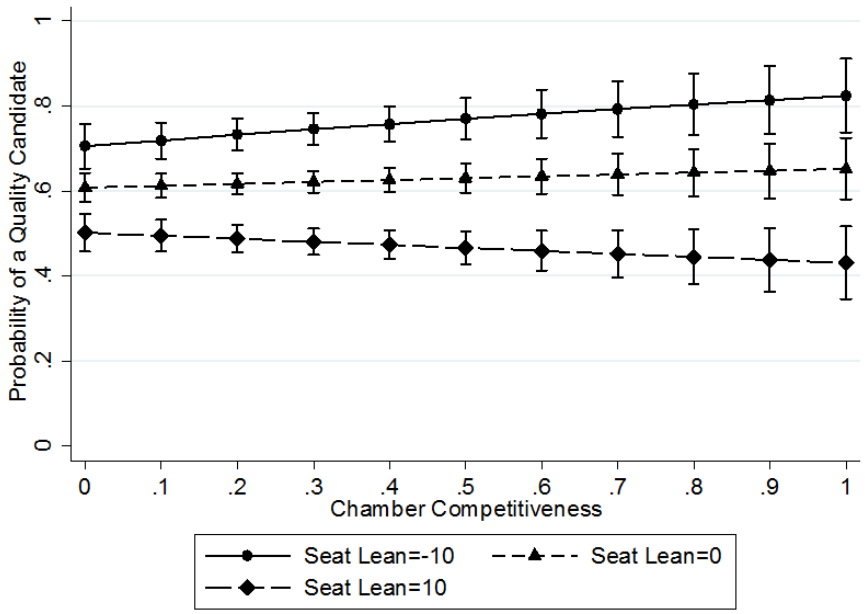
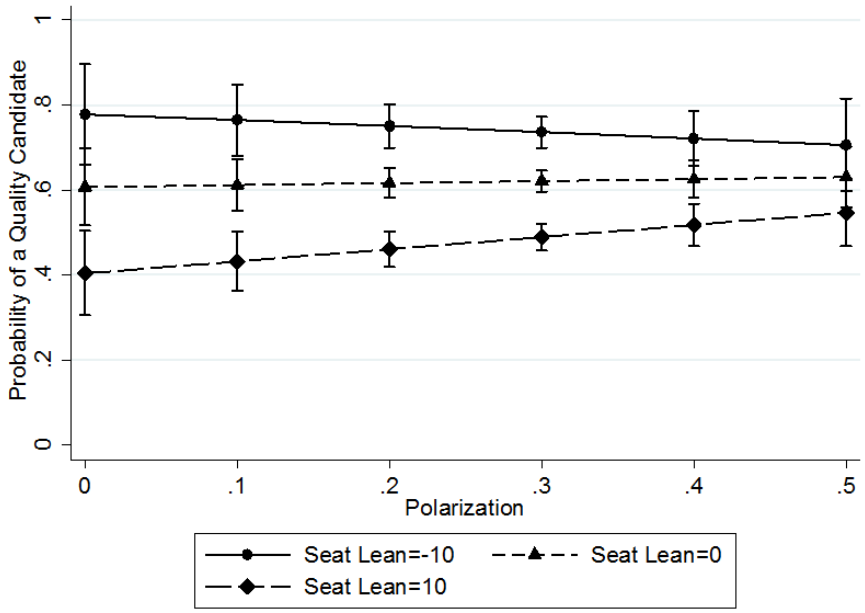


Figure 3.14: Marginal Effects Plot for Polarization in Senate (1914-2014)



For state legislatures, the dependent variable in the logit model used to test these hypotheses again measures whether or not a candidate has previously held elective office in order to remain consistent with the other models. The focal independent variables in this logit model, as with the previous models, are chamber competitiveness, polarization, presidential margin, and the two interaction terms. Control variables reflect the modifications for state legislatures discussed previously in this dissertation.

For state legislatures, there is strong support for the hypothesis pertaining to polarization in both election years, while the factor pertaining to chamber competitiveness receives stronger support in the 2014 model than in the 2012 model. One factor affecting chamber competitiveness that may be enlarging the standard error at higher levels of chamber competitiveness is the relative paucity of data from states with high levels of chamber competitiveness. As one can observe in Figures 3.3 and 3.4, about 80 percent of states have a value of chamber competitiveness that is less than 0.2 (on a 0 to 1.0 scale). This stands in strong contrast to the

House and Senate, where chamber competitiveness tends to fluctuate across a wide range of values and (with the exception of the period of Democratic control from 1954-1994) tends not to stagnate at low values for a long period of time. The distribution of chamber competitiveness in this manner at the state level speaks to the lack of competitiveness in state legislatures in recent years, especially when one considers the fact that 2012 was generally a strong year for Democratic candidates and 2014 swung in the direction of Republican candidates. Nevertheless, in both election years a pattern exists that is similar to the U.S. House and Senate (see Table 3.5). Looking at polarization, the pattern is similar to that of the House of Representatives with an increase in the marginal effect of polarization at levels of presidential margin that are more favorable to the party not currently holding that seat. For example, in 2012 a state legislative seat that was 20 points more favorable to the party not currently holding that seat than the state as a whole, the probability that a high-quality candidate runs increases from about 19 percent to about 34 percent as polarization (using the McCarty-Shor measure) increases from 0 to 3.0. In contrast, the marginal effect of polarization is flat at less favorable levels of presidential margin for the party not currently holding that seat. Looking at the control variables, the open seat variable is positive and significant, while the variable measuring district leanings as compared to the country as a whole is negative and significant. For 2012, the divided government dummy variable is negative and significant, while for 2014, the variable measuring years since being in the majority is negative and significant. The Republican seat variable is also positive and significant for 2012. For both years, legislative professionalism is positive and significant, suggesting that high-quality out-party candidates are more likely to run for office in states with professional legislatures, perhaps viewing such seats as a stepping stone to even higher political office. The Senate dummy variable is positive and significant, indicating that, as at the national

level, high-quality candidates are more likely to run for the upper chamber. Finally, the variable measuring the percentage of African American in that state is negative and significant.

Figure 3.15: Marginal Effects Plot for Chamber Competitiveness in State Legislative Chambers in 2012

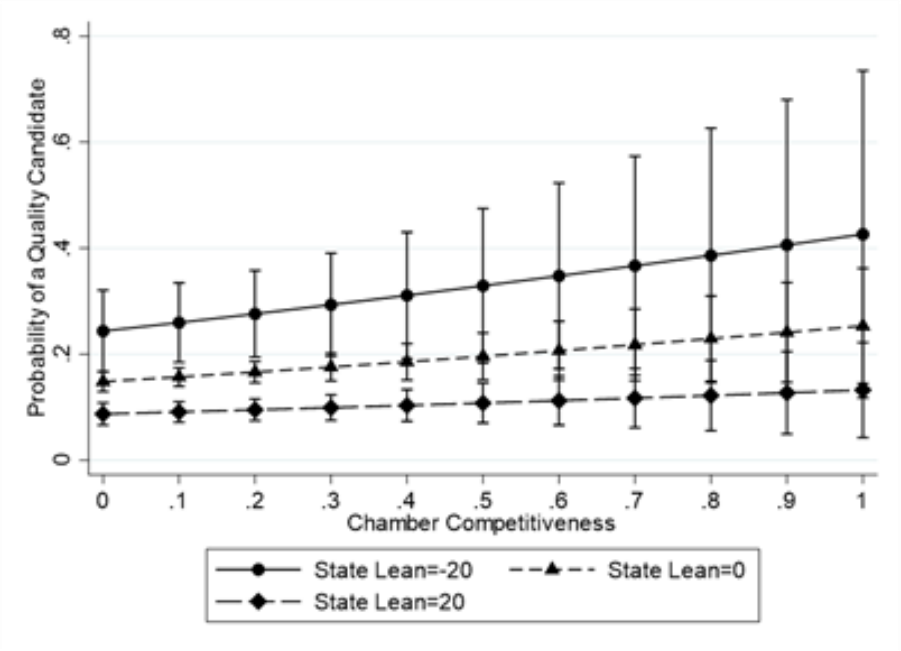


Figure 3.16: Marginal Effects Plot for Polarization in State Legislative Chambers in 2012

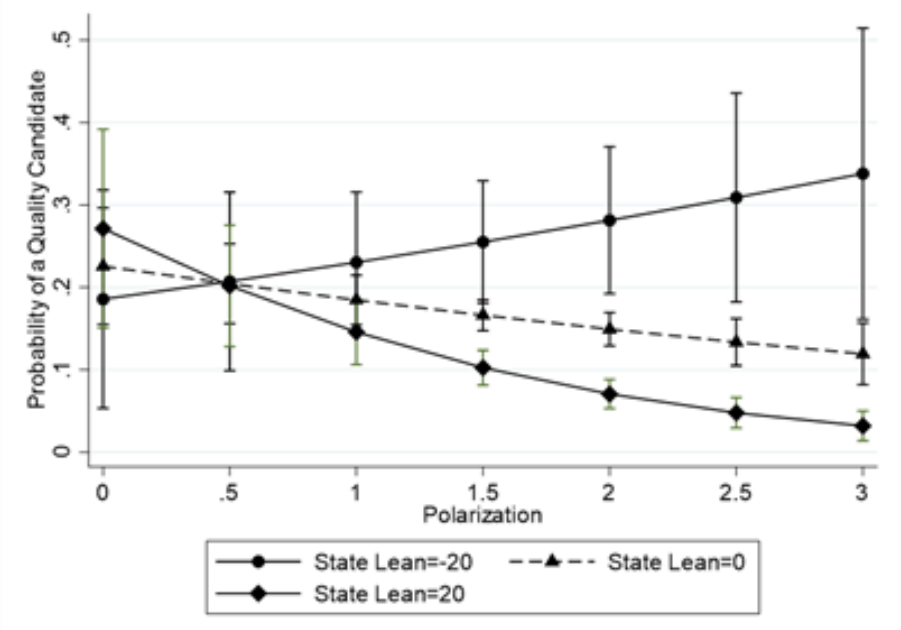


Figure 3.17: Marginal Effects Plot for Chamber Competitiveness in State Legislative Chambers in 2014

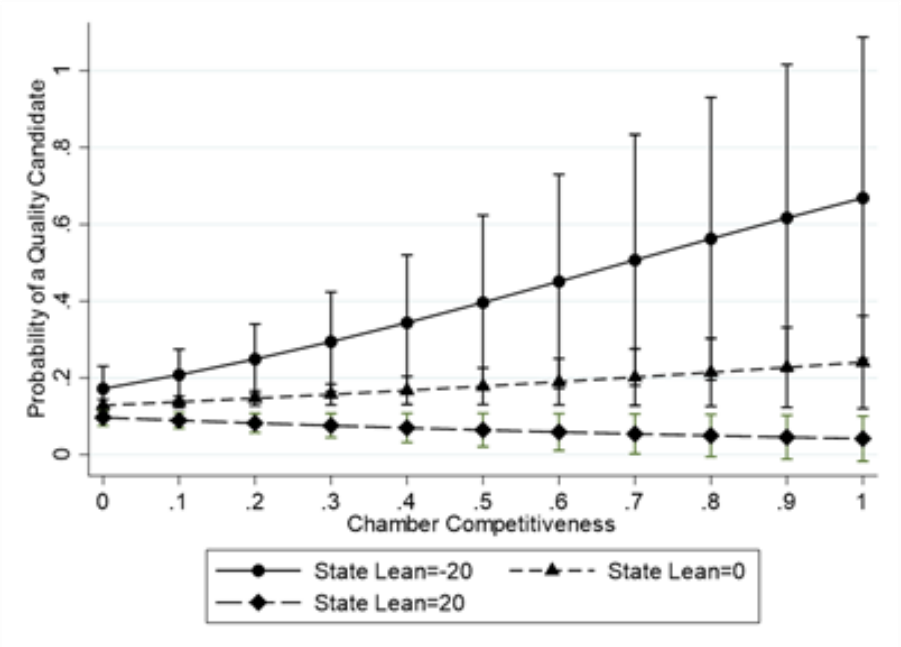


Figure 3.18: Marginal Effects Plot for Polarization in State Legislative Chambers in 2014

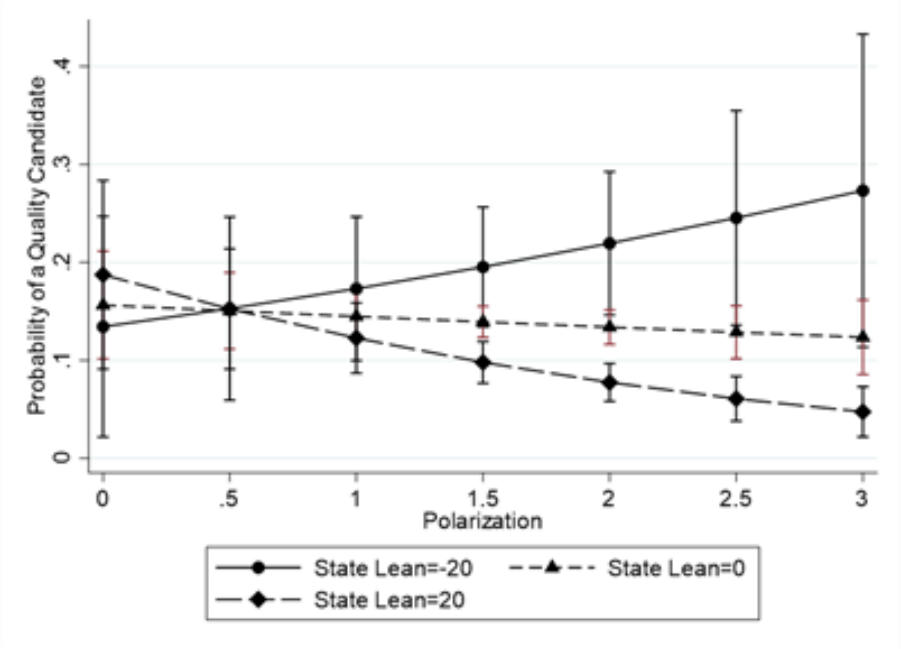


Table 3.5: The Decision to Run for State Legislatures

Variable	Logit Model (2012)	Logit Model (2014)
Chamber Competitiveness	0.733*	0.851*
	(0.356)	(0.402)
Polarization	-0.282*	-0.101
	(0.135)	(0.137)
District Lean Compared to State	0.015	0.020
	(0.018)	(0.019)
Chamber Competitiveness* District Lean Compared to State	-0.011	-0.090*
	(0.028)	(0.045)
Polarization*District Lean Compared to State	-0.029*	-0.022*
	(0.010)	(0.011)
District Lean Compared with Country	-0.043*	-0.051*
	(0.007)	(0.007)
Years Since Majority	-0.003	-0.007*
	(0.002)	(0.003)
Divided Government	-0.274*	-0.096
	(0.135)	(0.126)
Open Seat	0.699*	0.889*
	(0.114)	(0.118)
Majority Party Seat	0.012	0.199
	(0.141)	(0.140)
GOP Held Seat	0.426*	0.089
	(0.108)	(0.106)
Legislative Professionalism	3.000*	1.232*
	(0.444)	(0.431)
State Percent African American	-0.038*	-0.042*
	(0.008)	(0.009)
Senate Dummy	0.388*	0.512*
	(0.109)	(0.113)
Intercept	-1.429*	-1.389*
	(0.278)	(0.281)
N	3,885	4,330
Log-likelihood	-1332.656	-1387.098

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures if a high-quality candidate decides to run.

High Polarization, Low Competitiveness, and the Effect of Hardship on the Minority Party

Next, using the measures of chamber competitiveness and polarization, the second hypothesis can be tested in the context of the post-War House (1946-2014) and then the pre-World War II House (1872-1944) and the U.S. Senate. In review, this hypothesis is that *as the difference between polarization and chamber competitiveness (Polarization-Chamber Competitiveness) increases, the likelihood that a high-quality minority party candidate runs for a seat held by the other party decreases*. This hypothesis is based on the expectation that conditions of high polarization and low competitiveness result in miserable conditions for the minority party, causing high-quality candidates to be less likely to want to run for seats in a legislative body. As such, the dependent variable in the logit model used to test this hypothesis is the dichotomous measure of candidate quality used in the previous section of this chapter. Both chamber competitiveness and polarization are measured on the same scale (0 to 1), so I create a measure of hardship for the minority party by subtracting chamber competitiveness from polarization.[21] In addition, as this hypothesis pertains to the majority party status of a member, these models also include a majority party dummy variable and an interaction term constructed by multiplying the hardship index and majority party dummy. The same control variables—years since the other party held majority control, divided government, a dummy variable for open seats, a dummy variable for majority party seats, and a dummy variable for Republican seats—are also included in the model.

This hypothesis receives support in the model for the post-World War II House. Consistent with expectations, the interaction term between the hardship index and majority party seat are statistically significant and negative. As majority party seats are those where the out-

[21] Polarization is measured on a different, unbounded scale for state legislatures, preventing the creation of this measure for those bodies.

party candidate is from the minority party, this evidence suggests that minority party candidates are less likely to run for office when the conditions they expect to face negative conditions in a legislative body were they to win that seat and go on to serve in the minority of that legislative body. A marginal effects plot (see Figure 3.19) displays results that are also generally consistent with the second hypothesis. As hardship rises from -0.5 to 0.5 the probability that a high-quality out-party minority party candidate runs for a seat held by the other party drops from 22 percent to 18 percent. At the same time, there is an increase in the probability that a high-quality majority party candidate will run for a seat held by the other party.

Figure 3.19: Marginal Effects Plot of Minority Party Hardship on Quality Candidates Running for Post-World War II House (1946-2014)

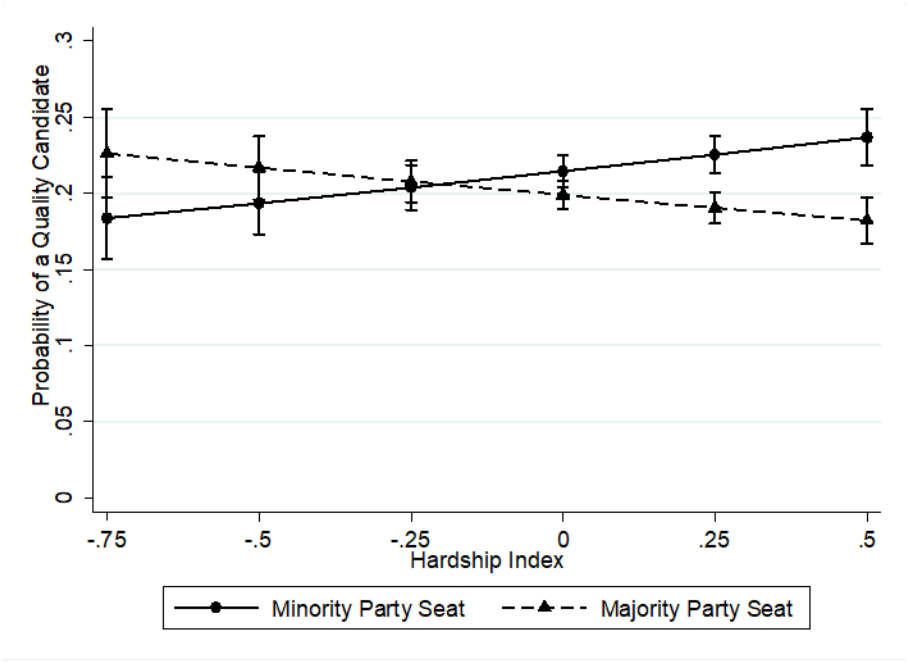


Table 3.6: Minority Party Hardship and the Decision to Run for Office

Variable	Post-World War II Logit (1946-2014)	Pre-World War II House Logit (1872-1944)	Senate Logit (1914-2014)
Hardship Index	0.284*	0.067	0.604*
	(0.113)	(0.147)	(0.275)
Majority Party	-0.104*	-0.123*	-0.194
	(0.050)	(0.049)	(0.114)
Hardship Index*Majority Party	-0.524*	-0.807*	-1.140*
	(0.149)	(0.191)	(0.385)
Years Since Majority	-0.004	-0.028*	-0.004
	(0.002)	(0.006)	(0.009)
Divided Government	-0.026	0.710*	0.023
	(0.049)	(0.061)	(0.107)
Open Seat	0.927*	0.432*	0.516*
	(0.064)	(0.054)	(0.131)
Seat Lean	-0.066*	-0.065*	-0.059*
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.006)
GOP Held Seat	0.307*	-0.050	0.353*
	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.118)
Located in South	-0.923*	-0.314*	-0.934*
	(0.059)	(0.072)	(0.135)
Intercept	-0.922*	-0.438*	0.587
	(0.066)	(0.080)	(0.146)
N	14,189	10,673	1,752
Log-likelihood	-6525.484	-5539.891	-1064.033

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures if a high-quality candidate decides to run.

Using the same variables, I also test this hypothesis in the context of the pre-World War II House and the U.S. Senate. My hypothesis also receives support in the models for each of these institutions. For the pre-War House model, the marginal effect of hardship on the probability of a high-quality candidate running for a majority party seat is negative as the

hardship index increases, while the relationship for a minority party seat is relatively flat. This result is also largely in keeping with the second hypothesis. The same pattern is largely present for the Senate as well; as the hardship index increases from -0.5 to 0.5, the probability that a high-quality out-party candidate runs for a majority party seat drops from about 63 percent to about 48 percent.

Figure 3.20: Marginal Effects Plot of Minority Party Hardship on Quality Candidates Running for Pre-War House (1872-1944)

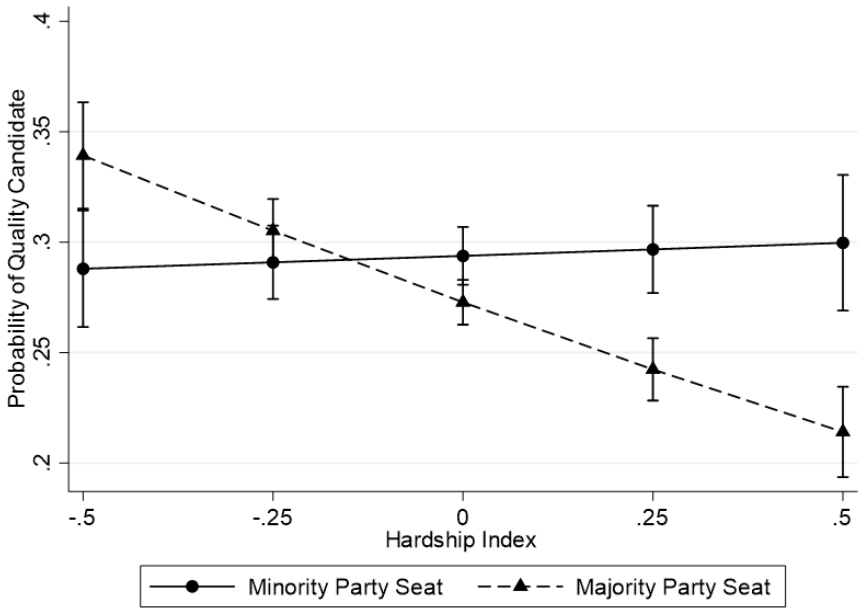
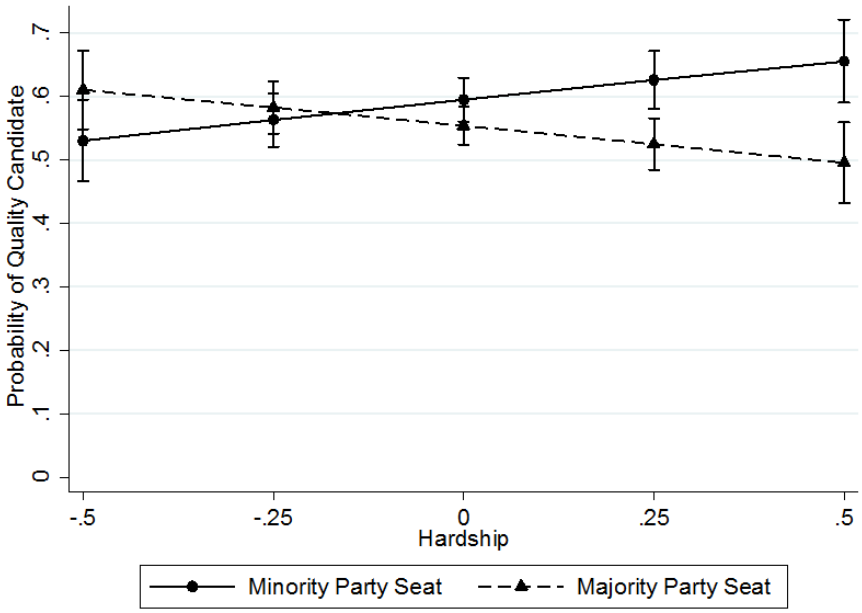


Figure 3.21: Marginal Effects Plot of Minority Party Hardship on Quality Candidates Running for U.S. Senate (1914-2014)



Discussion

Overall, the evidence put forward in this chapter provides support for the first two sets of hypotheses put forward in the previous chapter. For the first set of hypotheses, the chamber competitiveness and the polarization hypothesis are each supported in four of five models. The second hypothesis is tested in three different institutional contexts and receives support in the models for all three institutions. In total, this evidence suggests that high-quality candidates may take institution-level factors—in this case, chamber competitiveness and polarization—into account when considering whether to run for a legislative seat. While previous research has shown that members of Congress take their own electoral prospects (Mayhew 1974) or their party's likely prospects on their own chances of reelection (Jacobson 1989) into account, the research presented in this chapter demonstrates that a broader set of factors affecting the party as a whole also have the potential to play a role in a potential high-quality candidate's decision on whether to run for office. For example, in keeping with the second hypothesis, a high-quality

candidate who feels that he or she could potentially win a seat held by the other party might have second thoughts if the legislative body this individual might run for featured high levels of polarization and low levels of chamber competitiveness. For a minority party already facing long odds, this sort of decision makes winning back the majority even more difficult, as they may be forced to field inexperienced candidates in even some of the most conceivably winnable seats held by the other party.

While this chapter focuses on candidates, focusing on these individuals does not necessarily tell the entire story of why candidates decide to run for office. Candidates do not make these decisions in a vacuum and may be influenced by outside actors. Chief among these outside political actors are political parties, which may try to recruit high-quality potential candidates to run for office. The next chapter explores the conditions in which political parties are likely to engage in such recruitment efforts and under which conditions such efforts are likely to be most successful.

CHAPTER 4: CHAMBER COMPETITIVENESS, POLITICAL POLARIZATION, AND POLITICAL PARTIES

Building off of the previous chapter in this dissertation, this chapter investigates the involvement of political parties in recruiting and supporting legislative candidates. While the previous chapter focuses on high-quality candidates' decisions to run for office, it is important to understand that this process does not occur in a vacuum. Some candidates may decide to run all on their own, but—particularly in recent decades— national party committees (e.g. Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, National Republican Congressional Committee) have begun to engage in a process of party recruitment (Herrnson 1988) in order to convince the candidates who they view as the most electable to run for office.

As presented in the second chapter of this dissertation, I theorize that party committees are more likely to engage in recruitment efforts under conditions of high chamber competitiveness and high polarization. In terms of competitiveness, I theorize that the knowledge that a single seat might sway the balance of power in that legislative chamber prompts party committees to engage in recruitment efforts. I also theorize that increased levels of political polarization in that legislative chamber increases what is at stake in an election and stimulate party committees to engage in recruitment efforts. Additionally, due to the miserable conditions of serving in the minority party caucus of a legislative chamber under conditions of high polarization and low competitiveness, I posit that such conditions make it difficult for party committees to recruit candidates to run for a legislative chamber. Finally, I examine a second way in which party committees can get involved in legislative elections through campaign

finance. Consistent with expectations for party recruitment, I theorize that conditions of high polarization and high competitiveness promote increased levels of spending by party committees.

In this chapter, I test my theory as it pertains to political parties in the context of the U.S. House (1976-2014), as well as the U.S. Senate during the same time period and (for campaign spending) state legislatures in 2012 and 2014. First, I test the set of hypotheses presented in the theory section relating to chamber competitiveness and polarization and party recruitment attempts. Second, I examine the relationship between minority party hardship and the success of party committees at recruiting candidates for office. Third, I test the relationship between chamber competitiveness and polarization and campaign spending. Finally, I discuss how my results relate to other chapters in this dissertation.

Political Party Engagement in Candidate Recruitment

In looking at party committee engagement in legislative elections, the first step is to look at these committees' attempts to recruit candidates to run for office. At the national level, each party caucus in the House and Senate has an associated campaign committee [i.e. Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC), National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC), Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC), and National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC)] that works to obtain/protect majority party status for that party caucus by engaging in a number of actions.[22] In recent years, one of the most important, yet controversial, actions of party committees has been to engage in party recruitment in order to convince the candidates they believe have the best chance of winning that they should run for office. These efforts have the potential to have a big upside (if a recruited candidate wins), but also have the potential to receive backlash from local activists in a state or congressional district

[22] Due to the lack of a consistent news source about candidate recruitment efforts across states, I test this set of hypothesis at only the national level.

who feel that the national party should not meddle in local affairs. To offer one anecdote from the 2016 election, local party activists in the San Joaquin Valley of California expressed frustration with DCCC efforts to recruit candidates to run in the California 10th and 21st congressional districts, seats held by Republican members of Congress that were also won by President Obama in the 2012 election. Indeed, a local Democratic Party official named Doug Kessler expressed frustration with DCCC saying that the local party wanted "some say who a candidate is" and to "have people who respect and understand the Valley and do not dictate to us" (Ellis 2015). Given the reaction from local party officials like Doug Kessler, why would party committee leaders choose to engage in candidate recruitment? In this section, I test the theory that chamber competitiveness and political polarization play a role in bringing about party recruitment efforts.

The dependent variable in these models measures whether or not a party committee engaged in recruitment efforts for that year. To find whether or not a party committee engaged in candidate recruitment, I used the Lexis Nexis database to find articles from the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and Capitol Hill newspaper *Roll Call* that discuss these efforts, as well as separately searching for articles in the publication *CQ Weekly*. To find relevant articles to look for data on party recruitment efforts, I designed a search string that cast a wide net over articles that had the potential to discuss recruitment efforts.[23] In order to include an equal number of election years in the uncompetitive pre-1994 election period and generally competitive post-1994 period, I began my analysis in 1976. As CQ Weekly is only available online starting in 1983, I

[23] This search string was "Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee" OR "DSCC" OR "NRSC" OR "National Republican Senatorial Committee" OR "Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee" OR "DCCC" OR "National Republican Congressional Committee" OR "NRCC" AND (persuade* OR convince* OR encourage* OR recruit* OR draft* OR nudge* OR coax* OR urge* OR push* OR prompt* OR lure* OR entice*).

used the index for issues from the pre-1983 period to obtain articles for this publication. Finally, *Roll Call* is only available online from the 1990 election cycle to the present; I account for the potential for the lack of pre-1990 articles to skew the results by including a control variable in the model.

One potential criticism of this method to construct the dependent variable is that this method does not capture all recruitment efforts. Although this potential criticism is likely correct that all recruitment efforts are not captured in news articles, I argue that the non-reporting of recruitment efforts is unlikely to occur in a biased manner in these publications. By limiting the sample to the same publications over time (or controlling for the lack of a publication in a period of time in the case of *Roll Call*), the extent to which a newspaper seeks to report on candidate recruitment efforts is unlikely to change over time. Another potential criticism is that rise in candidate recruitment efforts may simply be increasing in recent years rather than as a result of increased chamber competitiveness or polarization. Thus, before proceeding with this analysis I compute correlations between candidate recruitment efforts and the election year, finding a very weak correlation between these two variables (0.12 in the U.S. House and 0.19 in the U.S. Senate.)

Moving forward, the independent variables in these models are similar to those used in the models in the previous chapter. The two central concepts in this dissertation, chamber competitiveness and polarization, are measured in the same manner as in the previous chapter. To review, the chamber competitiveness measure is constructed using OLS models that predict the outcome of legislative elections, while the polarization measure at the national measure is created using DW-Nominate Scores. As with previous models, I include interactions between these variables and the lean of the district as compared to the country as a whole. Other control

variables include measures of the number of years since the out-party in that chamber controlled the majority and whether or not (ceteris paribus) there is divided government; I also include a dummy variable measuring whether the seat is controlled by the GOP, a measure of whether the seat is currently held by the majority party, a measure of whether the seat features an incumbent running for reelection, and variable measuring whether the seat is located in the South. Finally, unlike previous models, I include a dummy variable that measures whether the election year for that observation is in 1990 or later to account for the availability of *Roll Call* only after that date.

Table 4.1: Determinants of House Party Committee Recruitment

Variable	Chamber Competitiveness Only	Full Model	Index Model
Chamber Competitiveness	1.863* (0.191)	0.415 (0.272)	
Polarization		3.572* (1.416)	
Index (Chamber Competitiveness + Polarization)			0.568* (0.269)
Seat Lean Compared to Nation	-0.057* (0.009)	0.084* (0.034)	-0.049* (0.020)
Chamber Competitiveness*Seat Lean Compared to Nation	-0.053* (0.020)	0.003 (0.023)	
Polarization* Seat Lean Compared to Nation		-0.394* (0.081)	
Index* Seat Lean Compared to Nation			-0.049* (0.020)
Years Since Majority		-0.016* (0.008)	-0.026* (0.006)

Divided Government		-0.024 (0.161)	-0.106 (0.153)
Open Seat		1.019* (0.143)	1.037* (0.141)
Majority Party Seat		0.160 (0.120)	0.130 (0.119)
GOP Held Seat		0.554* (0.123)	0.538* (0.123)
Located in South		-0.246* (0.133)	-0.265* (0.132)
1990 or Later (Roll Call Available)		0.968* (0.271)	1.175* (0.225)
Intercept	-3.333* (0.085)	-5.316* (0.680)	-4.058* (0.344)
Log-Likelihood	-1350.134	-1234.336	-1244.828
N	8,570	8,570	8,570

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures whether the out-party committee tried to recruit a candidate to run for that seat.

The presence of multicollinearity in this model complicates interpretation of the extent to which these results are in keeping with the hypothesis for chamber competitiveness in the context of the House. As one can observe in the full model, the interaction term (chamber competitiveness *seat lean) does not obtain significance, a result which is also reflected in Figure 4.2. However, this lack of significance may be due to the presence of multicollinearity in the model. While it is no surprise that there is multicollinearity in this model due to the inclusion of two interaction terms which both include one of the same variables (seat lean compared to the nation as a whole), the variance inflation factors (VIFs) for this model (some of which are around 20) prompt further investigation. Upon running a model with only chamber competitiveness, seat lean, and the relevant interaction term, a result is obtained that is in

keeping with my hypothesis. Marginal effects plots (see Figure 4.1 and 4.2) show that, in the simper model, the probability of a recruitment attempt increases as chamber competitiveness increases for seats that are favorable for the party based on the result in the most recent presidential election as compared to the national result. In contrast, the full model suggests a null relationship between chamber competitiveness and attempted party recruitment across all levels of seat lean. Together, these results present a nuanced picture for the relationship between chamber competitiveness and attempted party recruitments; following a discussion of the relationship between polarization and attempted party recruitment, I will discuss an additional possibility for dealing with the multicollinearity problem for these models.

Figure 4.1: Marginal Effects Plot of Chamber Competitiveness and Attempted Party Recruitment (Competitiveness Only Model)

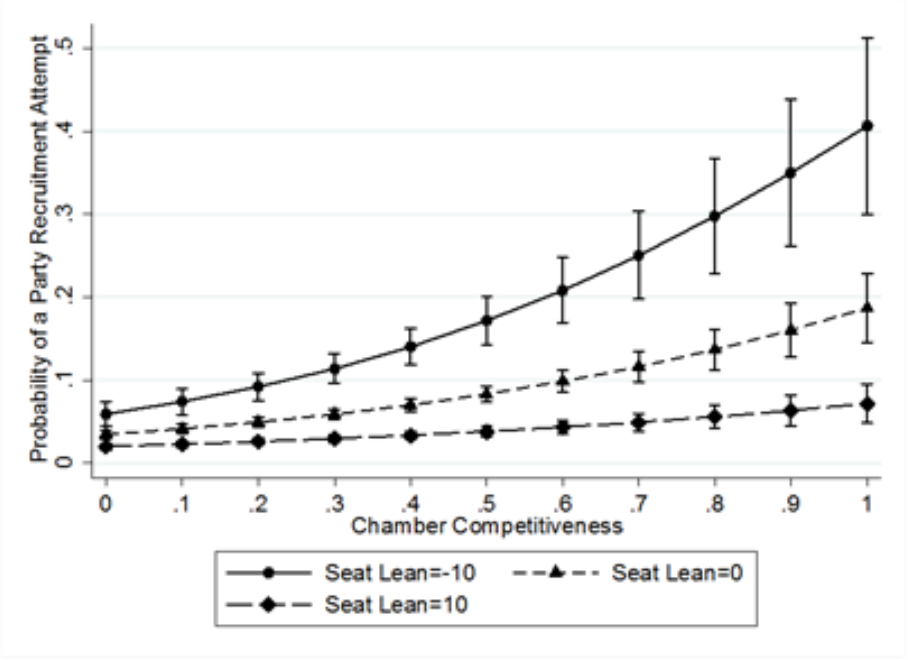
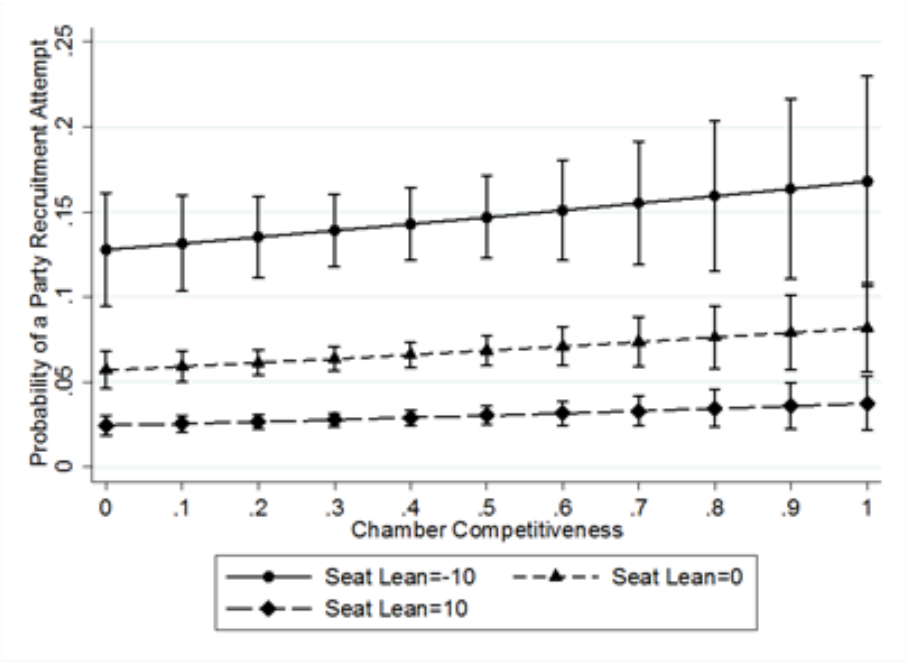


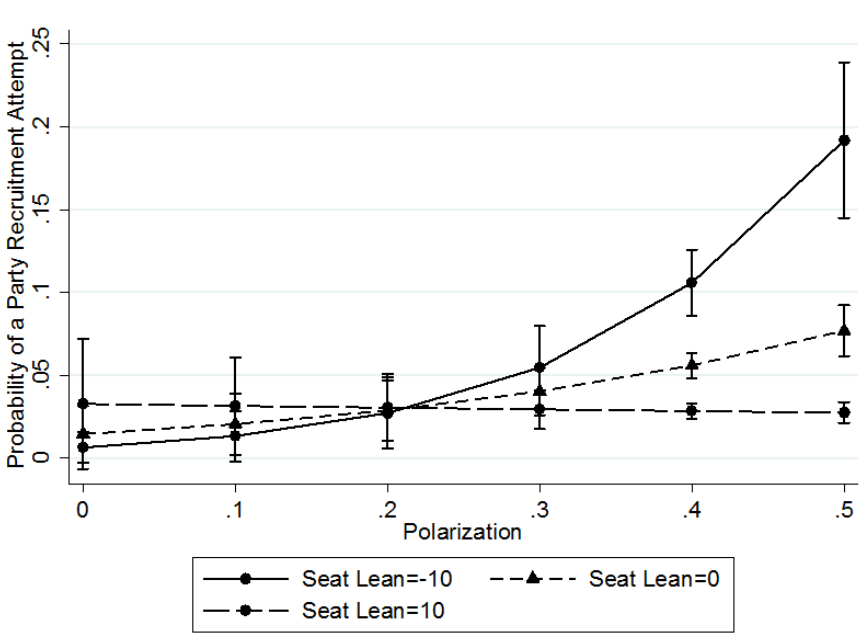
Figure 4.2: Marginal Effects Plot of Competitiveness and Attempted Party Recruitment (Full Model)



In contrast to the nuanced results for chamber competitiveness, the results for polarization in the House are in keeping with my hypothesis in the full model. As one can see in Figure 4.3 below, seats that present favorable conditions for the party that does not currently hold them have become increasingly likely to feature attempted party recruitment as levels of polarization increase. For example, in a seat that was won by the out-party by 10 percent in the last presidential election as compared to the national average, but is held by the president's party, the probability of a recruitment attempt increases from 0.1% to 19.2% as polarization increases from 0.0 to 0.5). In contrast, a seat that features unfavorable conditions for the party that does not currently hold that seat experiences a decreased probability of a candidate recruitment attempt as polarization increases. For example, in a seat that is 10 percentage points less favorable than the national average in the last presidential election, the probability of a recruitment attempt decreases from 3.3% to 2.7% as polarization increases from 0.0 to 0.5. In total, these results are supportive of my hypothesis and suggest that, as the stakes of an election increase, party

committees are more likely to engage in recruitment efforts. Before turning to a discussion of an additional way to deal with multicollinearity, it is also noteworthy that, in the full model, the South and years since majority control variables are negative and significant and that the *Roll Call*, open seat, and Republican seat variables relate positively to a party committee recruitment attempt.

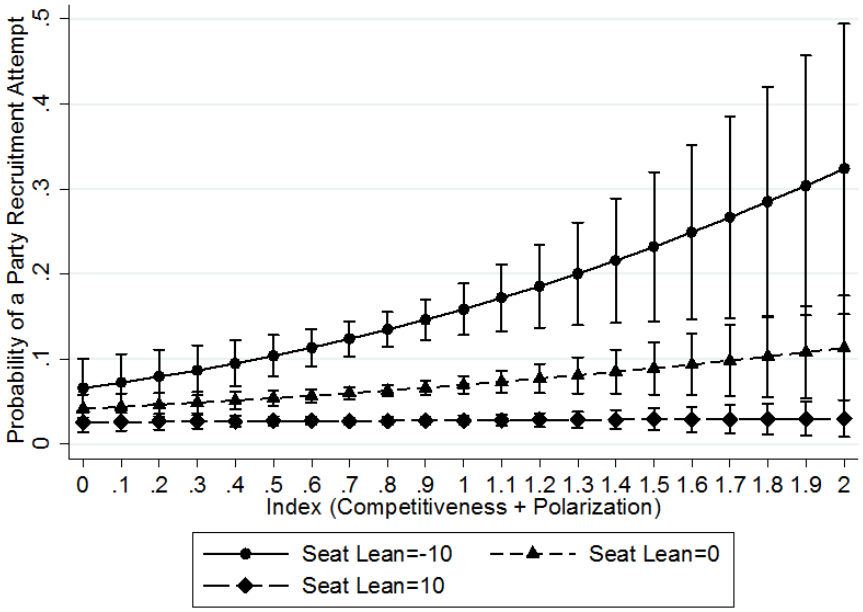
Figure 4.3: Marginal Effects Plot of Polarization and Attempted Party Recruitment in the House



Turning back to the multicollinearity issue, I also run a model using an additive index measure that combines chamber competitiveness and polarization by adding these two concepts together. By eliminating a second interaction term, this solution is likely to reduce the amount of multicollinearity in the model. At the same time, this solution is far from perfect and is best employed when the components of the index tap into the same underlying concept (Berry and Feldman 1985). While chamber competitiveness and polarization are not the exact same concept, one could say that these two concepts tap into a broader concept of "electoral engagement motivation." Another shortcoming is that, by combining these two terms together one can no

longer determine the individual effect of chamber competitiveness or polarization on the probability of a candidate recruitment attempt across various levels of seat lean. However, proceeding with this strategy as one possible solution, one can observe in Figure 4.4 below that the relationship between the index and the probability of party recruitment is largely in keeping with the expectation that an increase of chamber competitiveness or polarization results in an increase in the probability of a candidate recruitment attempt at favorable levels of seat lean. For example, as the index measure increases from 0 to 1, the probability of a candidate recruitment attempt in a seat that the out-party won by 10 percentage points more than the national average in the last presidential election, but is held by the president's party, increases from 6.6% to 15.9%. Additionally, also in keeping with expectations, the probability of a candidate recruitment attempt is basically flat across levels of the index for a seat that is unfavorable for that party based upon the previous presidential election. These results show that, broadly conceived, "electoral engagement motivation" is positively related with the probability of a candidate recruitment attempt when the presidential vote share is favorable for the party that does not currently hold the seat.

Figure 4.4: Marginal Effects Plot of Index Measure and Attempted Party Recruitment in the House



The results of the Senate model are largely similar to those obtained for the House. As with the House, multicollinearity may be affecting the result for chamber competitiveness.[24] Once again, there is a null result for the chamber competitiveness*seat lean interaction term in the full model, but this term attains significance in the simpler model. The below predicted probability plots (see Figures 4.5 & 4.6) bear out this relationship. In the simpler model, the predicted probability of a recruitment attempt increases as chamber competitiveness increases for seats that are more favorable for that party (in terms of presidential vote) than the national average. In contrast, in the full model, the predicted probability of a recruitment attempt is essentially flat as chamber competitiveness increases for seats that are both more and less favorable (in terms of presidential vote) than the national average.

[24] Several VIFs for this model exceed 40.

Table 4.2: Determinants of Senate Party Committee Recruitment

Variable	Chamber Competitiveness Only	Full Model	Index Model
Chamber Competitiveness	0.388 (0.295)	-0.019 (0.407)	
Polarization		0.317 (2.892)	
Index (Chamber Competitiveness + Polarization)			0.056 (0.312)
Seat Lean Compared to Nation	0.004* (0.017)	0.214* (0.086)	0.007 (0.032)
Chamber Competitiveness*Seat Lean Compared to Nation	-0.115* (0.039)	-0.038 (0.048)	
Polarization*Seat Lean Compared to Nation		-0.727* (0.249)	
Index*Seat Lean Compared to Nation			-0.098* (0.041)
Years Since Majority		-0.171* (0.027)	-0.168* (0.026)
Divided Government		-0.147 (0.231)	-0.098 (0.226)
Open Seat		0.598* (0.220)	0.612* (0.217)
Majority Party Seat		0.006 (0.182)	0.069 (0.180)
GOP Held Seat		0.403* (0.186)	0.408* (0.186)
Located in South		0.238 (0.210)	0.228 (0.209)

Roll Call		0.470 (0.314)	0.437* (0.214)
Intercept	-0.536* (0.127)	-0.060 (0.853)	-0.082 (0.441)
Log-Likelihood	-440.399	-375.927	-379.510
N	682	682	682

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures whether the out-party committee tried to recruit a candidate to run for that seat.

Figure 4.5 - Marginal Effects Plot of Chamber Competitiveness and Attempted Party Recruitment in the Senate (Chamber Competitiveness Only)

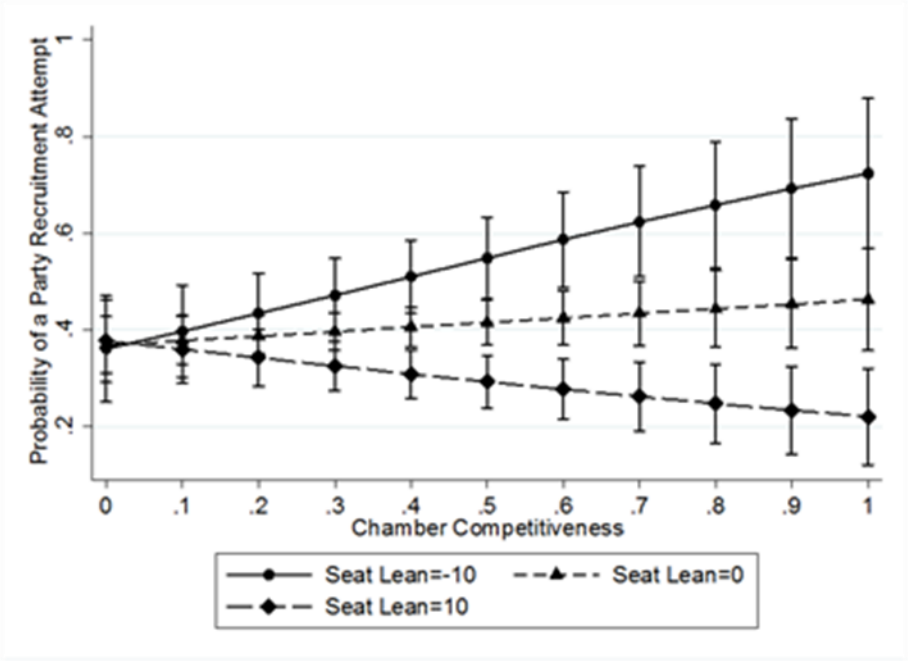
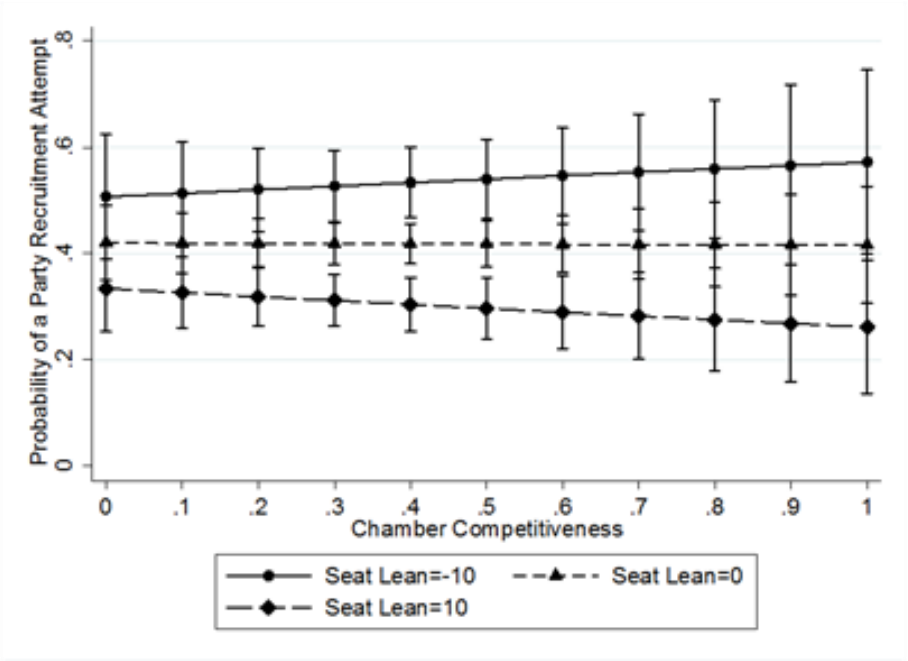
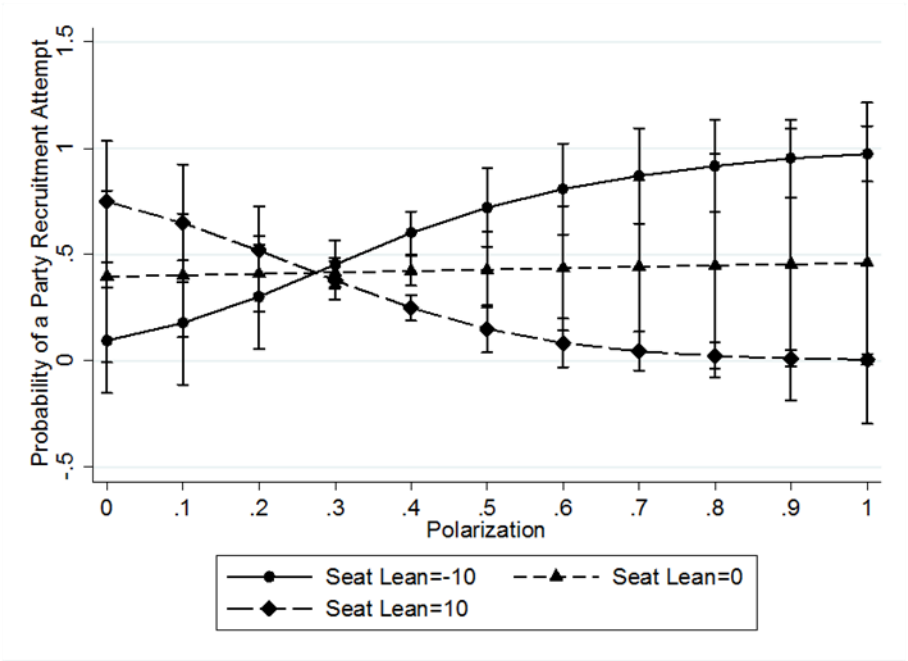


Figure 4.6: Marginal Effects Plot of Competitiveness and Attempted Party Recruitment in the Senate-Chamber (Full Model)



As with the House, there is strong support for the polarization hypothesis in the Senate. A positive relationship exists between polarization and the predicted probability of a recruitment attempt in seats that are favorable (in terms of presidential vote) for the party that does not currently hold them. For example, in a seat that is ten percentage points more favorable for the out-party than the national average in terms of presidential vote, as polarization increases from 0 to 0.5, the predicted probability of a candidate recruitment attempt increases from 9.6% to 72.2%. In contrast, the predicted probability of a candidate recruitment attempt in a seat that is ten percentage points less favorable for the out-party than the national average (in terms of presidential vote) decreases from 75% to 15% as polarization increases from 0 to 0.5. Several control variables also attain significance, with the open seat and GOP seat variables positively relating to the probability of a recruitment attempt, while the years since majority variable is negative and significant.

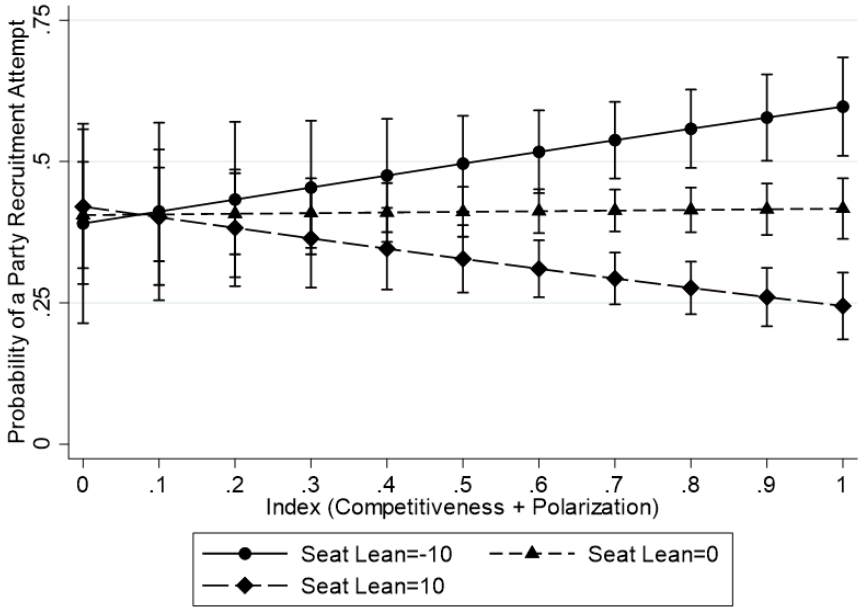
Figure 4.7: Marginal Effects Plot of Polarization and Attempted Party Recruitment in the Senate



Finally, once again, I create an additive index measure from chamber competitiveness and polarization to address the multicollinearity problem. As with the House model, there is a positive relationship between the index and probability of a candidate recruitment attempt for states that are favorable to the party that does not currently hold that seat (in terms of presidential vote). For example, for a seat that is ten percentage points more favorable than the national average (in terms of presidential vote), as the index measure increases from 0.0 to 1.0, the probability of a candidate recruitment attempt increases from 39.1% to 59.7%. In contrast, for a seat that is ten percentage points less favorable than the national average, as the index measure increases from 0.0 to 1.0, the probability of a recruitment attempt decreases from 42.0% to 24.5%. Once again, the usage of an index measure has a number of drawbacks as discussed previously, but this model provides one strategy for dealing with multicollinearity and again shows that "electoral engagement motivation" relates positively to the probability of a

recruitment attempt when presidential leanings of a seat are favorable for the party that does not currently hold that seat in the Senate.

Figure 4.8: Marginal Effects Plot of Index Measure and Attempted Party Recruitment in the Senate



Minority Party Hardship and Candidate Recruitment

In this section, I examine the relationship between hardship, majority party status, and attempted candidate recruitment in the House and Senate. To review, I hypothesize that as hardship increases the minority party achieves decreasing success in recruiting a candidate to run for office. In these models, the dependent variable measures whether or not there was a recruitment success in a district, in other words, did a candidate that the national party committees spoke to about running decide to run for office. The data for this variable was collected in the course of collecting the dependent variable for the models in the previous section; when it was not specified whether or not a candidate who was recruited by the national party decided to run or not, I conducted additional research to determine whether or not that candidate decided to run by looking at candidate lists from both the primary and general

elections from that election cycle. I examine primary election lists of candidates as well as general elections since a recruited candidate could theoretically lose the primary and thus not appear on the general election ballot [e.g. Rep. Mike Castle (R-DE) was defeated in the 2010 Delaware primary by conservative activist Christine O'Donnell]. As with the previous set of models, there is a quite weak correlation between the dependent variable (in this case, recruitment success) and time, as measured by election year (r=0.10 for the U.S. House and 0.15 for the U.S. Senate).

In terms of independent variables, I construct the focal measure of hardship in the same manner as the previous chapter by subtracting chamber competitiveness from polarization. Other focal independent variables include majority party status and an interaction between majority party status and hardship. Control variables include the measure of years since the minority party held the majority in that institution, divided government, the variable measuring whether or not the seat is located in the South, the measure of seat lean compared to the national average, a dummy variable indicating whether a seat is an open seat, and the 1990 or later dummy variable to account for the lack of availability of *Roll Call* before that time.

Table 4.3: Hardship, Majority Party Status, and Attempted Candidate Recruitment

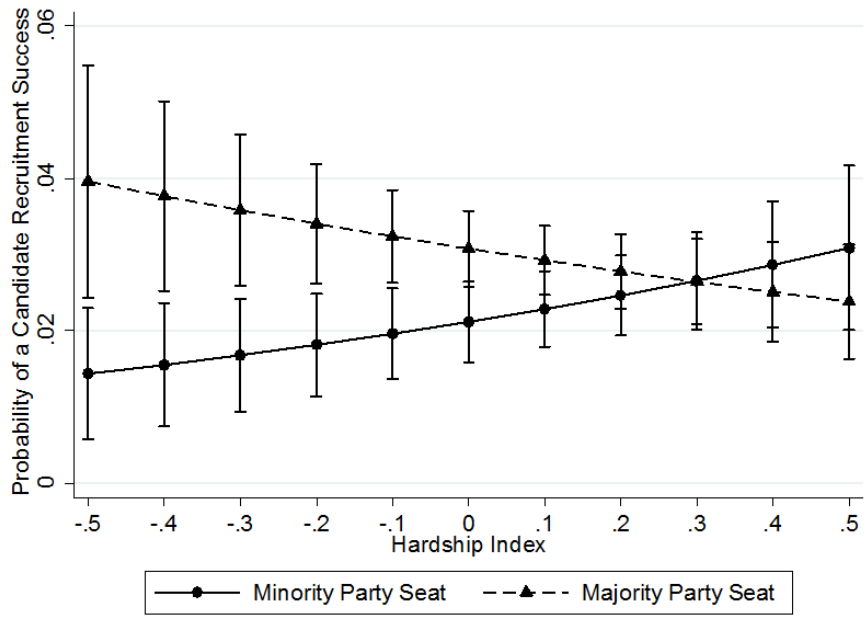
Variable	U.S. House	U.S. Senate
Hardship	0.824	-0.113
	(0.461)	(0.652)
Majority Party	0.408*	0.090
	(0.164)	(0.228)
Hardship*Majority Party	-1.384*	-0.644
	(0.540)	(0.849)
Years Since Majority	-0.032*	-0.172*
	(0.006)	(0.035)
Divided Government	-0.421	-0.104
	(0.170)	(0.280)
Located in South	-0.311*	-0.077
	(0.162)	(0.267)
Seat Lean	-0.084*	-0.050*
	(0.008)	(0.015)
Open	1.208*	1.314*
	(0.162)	(0.240)
1990 or Later (Roll Call Available)	1.424*	-0.054
	(0.264)	(0.274)
Log-Likelihood	-901.759	-264.848
N	7,850	682

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures whether the out-party committee successfully recruited a candidate to run for that seat.

In keeping with my hypothesis, for the House there is a negative relationship between hardship and the probability of a successful candidate recruitment for seats that are held by the majority party (and thus targeted by the minority party), while the opposite relationship exists for seats that are held by the minority party (see Figure 4.9). In terms of predicted probabilities, as the misery index increases from -0.5 to 0.5, the probability of a successful recruitment for the minority party falls from 4.0% to 2.4%. While this does not seem like an especially substantive

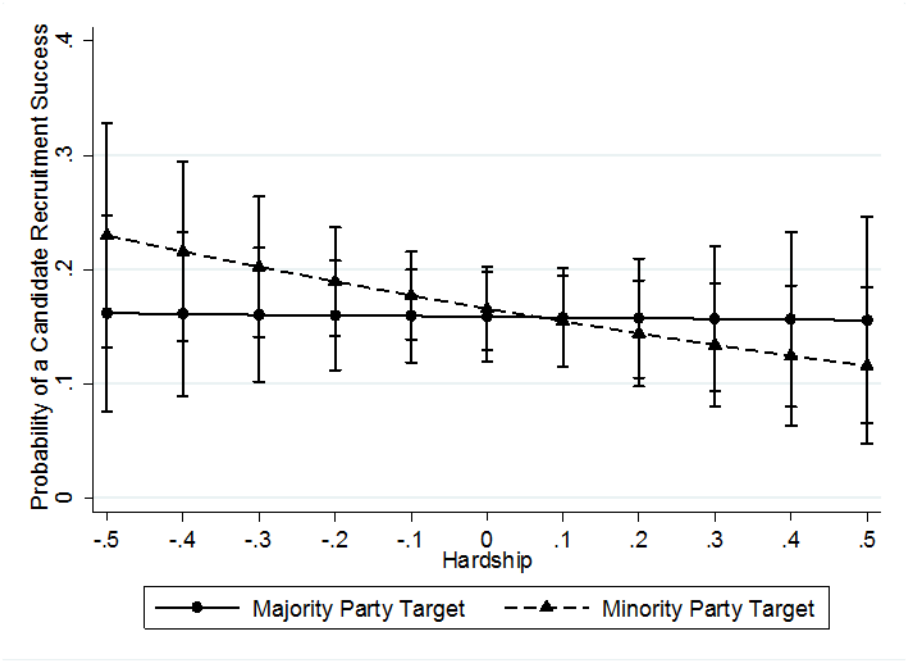
effect, in an era of competitive majorities, even a small drop in recruitment success has the potential to affect which party controls the majority.

Figure 4.9: Marginal Effects Plot of Hardship, Majority Party Status, and House Recruitment Success



As with the House, there is a negative relationship between hardship and the probability of a successful candidate recruitment for Senate seats that are held by the majority party (and thus targeted by the minority party), while the opposite relationship exists for seats that are held by the minority party, although the interaction term falls short of significance in the Senate model (see Figure 4.10 below). In terms of predicted probabilities, as the misery index increases from -0.5 to 0.5, the probability of a successful recruitment for the minority party falls from 23.0% to 11.6%. Substantively, this effect stands out more than that of the House model. Finally, in both models, the years since majority and seat lean variables relate negatively to the probability of a successful recruitment while the open seat variable is positively related to the probability of a successful recruitment. The *Roll Call* control variable (positive) is also significant in the House model.

Figure 4.10: Marginal Effects Plot of Hardship, Majority Party Status, and Senate Recruitment Success



Political Parties and Campaign Spending

Finally, I examine how increased chamber competitiveness and political polarization affects levels of campaign spending by party committees. To review, my hypothesis is that each of these factors has a positive relationship with party committee spending. I first test this hypothesis in the context of the U.S House starting in 1976, when such data was first made public by the Federal Election Commission, through the 2014 election.[25] The dependent variable in these models measures real spending by federal political party committees, including contributions, coordinated expenditures, and independent expenditures, while the focal independent variables are chamber competitiveness and polarization, measured in the same manner as in the previous sections of this chapter. Control variables include a dummy variable

[25] This data is available from the Campaign Finance Institute (http://www.cfinst.org/).

for whether a party holds the majority, a measure of years since the minority party held the majority, and a dummy variable for whether there is divided government.

Table 4.4: Party Committee Spending

Variable	House (1976-2014)	Senate (1976-2014)	State Legislatures (2012 & 2014)
Competitiveness	-24.313	2.085	34.949*
	(13.667)	(8.338)	(10.142)
Polarization	254.641*	255.167*	6.131
	(47.555)	(45.936)	(4.999)
Majority	1.102	3.136	10.072*
	(5.713)	(4.214)	(3.013)
Years Out	0.131	-0.384	-0.192*
	(0.348)	(0.235)	(0.042)
Divide	-22.881*	-8.519*	-1.043
	(7.040)	(4.126)	(4.465)
Professionalism	-	-	-1.678
			(12.943)
Intercept	-50.305*	-54.889*	3.604
	(24.384)	(16.128)	(7.503)
R^2	0.668	0.639	0.290
N	40	40	132

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures total in real spending in millions of dollars for House and Senate and real spending per 100 people for State Legislatures. State Legislature model uses robust standard errors to account for heteroscedasticity.

I do not find a significant association between chamber competitiveness and real campaign spending, while a positive and significant relationship exists between polarization and real campaign spending. Substantively, an increase in polarization of 0.1 units relates to a 25.9 million dollars increase in campaign committee spending (in real dollars). This finding suggests that polarization, more so than chamber competitiveness, drives party engagement in congressional elections. These findings for polarization are similar to those for party candidate

recruitment; in the next section of this dissertation I will discuss the implications of these findings for how polarization affects the behavior of political parties. Finally, in terms of control variables, only divided government attains significance and is negatively associated with party spending.

I also test these hypotheses in the context of the U.S. Senate since 1976 and state legislatures in 2012 and 2014. For the state legislative model, the dependent variable measures real spending per 100 people. The focal independent variables and control variables are the same as for the U.S. House, although the state legislative model also includes Squire's (2007) measure of legislative professionalism to account for differences across states, a measure of state population, and a dummy variable for state senates. As with the House, polarization—but not competitiveness—attains significance, while only competitiveness has a positive association with real spending per capita at the state level. A 0.1 unit increase in polarization in the Senate relates to an increase in campaign spending of 28.1 million real dollars. For state legislatures, a 0.1 unit increase in chamber competitiveness relates to an increase of $3.50 in spending per capita (in a state such as North Carolina which has just under 10 million residents, this would translate to an overall increase in spending of about $350,000). In terms of control variables, it is unexpected, but noteworthy to point out that the variable measuring majority party status is positive for both the Senate and states. Divided government relates to lower levels of campaign spending for the Senate. In keeping with Connelly and Pitney's (1994) observation of the "why bother" attitude that is sometimes prevalent amongst longstanding minorities, the variable measuring years out of the majority is negative in both models, though this measure only attains significance in the state legislative model. Interestingly, the positive relationship between legislative professionalism and spending does not attain significance.

Discussion

Overall, the results in this chapter provide suggest that there is a positive relationship between polarization and party engagement in the battle for majority control of legislative chambers, while the results for chamber competitiveness are somewhat more ambiguous. One potential explanation for this these results is that the overwhelming increase in polarization that has taken place in American legislative institutions in recent years has made the stakes of winning legislative majorities so high as to allow party committees to bear the costs of getting involved in candidate recruitment and raising money at lower levels of chamber competitiveness. Additionally, another potential explanation for these results is that political parties are willing to play a longer game in terms of winning majority control of legislative institutions. A candidate's decisions to run for office—either made alone or following a recruitment attempt—may be more sensitive to the immediacy of majority control than that of a party committee. While a legislator has to directly experience the frustration of losing vote after vote in a legislative body, party committees are somewhat more removed from the day-to-day legislative process. Finally, party committees may be compelled to put in their strongest efforts to win majority control, no matter the chances of success. Donors are unlikely to fund a party that openly expresses that they have no chance of winning and party officials may fear that they will be removed from their jobs if it looks like they are not putting in their strongest effort to win majority control. In total, the consistent significance of polarization across the models in this chapter provides support for parts of the hypotheses tested in this chapter and suggests that polarization has affected even more parts of the political system than previously known.

While party committees play an important role in the political process, their ability to spend money to maintain or regain majority control depends upon the willingness of their

members in Congress to engage in party fundraising efforts. As such, the next chapter of this dissertation focuses on incumbent legislators. In addition to examining the role of incumbent legislators in raising money for their party's efforts to regain or maintain majority control of a legislative chamber, the next chapter also looks at an additional way in which incumbent legislators engage in the battle for majority control by choosing to run for reelection or retire from that legislative institution.

Chapter 5: CHAMBER COMPETITIVENESS, POLITICAL POLARIZATION, AND LEGISLATIVE INCUMBENTS

Rep. Steve Israel (D-NY) shocked political observers in early 2016 when he announced that he would not be seeking another term in Congress so that he could focus on writing a second novel (Kelly 2016). In a post-announcement interview, Israel attributed his retirement to the fact that the system was "beyond broken" and that he was unwilling to spend any more time "in a call room begging for money" (Hulse 2016). As a member of the Democratic congressional leadership who consistently won reelection by solid margins, previous research suggests that a member like Israel would both want to and be successful at continuing to win reelection to Congress (e.g. Mayhew 1974, Fenno 1978, Rohde 1991). Yet, as Israel's interview comments suggest, while he may well have been able to win reelection, conditions in Congress were so miserable for him as a minority party member under conditions of extreme polarization that he decided it was no longer worth it to do so.

This anecdote illustrates two important decisions that members of Congress need to make each election cycle: whether to run for reelection and—if they decide to run again— the extent to which they are willing to contribute to party fundraising efforts to win majority control of the institution. While Israel's comments in isolation are anecdotal, he is not the only minority party House member to shock political observers with a retirement announcement in recent years. For example, also citing political dysfunction, Rep. Janice Hahn (D-CA) announced she would run for Los Angeles County Supervisor in 2016 rather than seek another term in Congress, making her the second California Democratic member of Congress to seek county office in recent years

(Cahn 2015a).[26] Other, non-retiring members of Congress have also expressed dissatisfaction with the need to raise money for the party. Legislators are unlikely to want to participate in this unpleasant task—Congressman John Larson (D-CT) called it "the most painful thing"— without some sort of incentive to prompt them to engage in this process (Grimm and Siddiqui 2013).

In this chapter, I first examine the decision of members of Congress to run for reelection. In keeping with the logic for high-quality prospective candidates tested in the third chapter, I theorize that conditions of high polarization and low chamber competitiveness result in hardship for members of the minority party as they policies they oppose pass and those they support are defeated. Seeing no way to advance their goals in the legislative body in which they currently serve, these legislators instead decide to retire from the body and run for higher office or, in some cases, leave politics altogether. In addition to testing this theory in the post-World War II House, I also examine it in the context of the pre-World War II House and the U.S. Senate since the start of the universal direction election of senators in 1914. While I expect this theory to extend to other institutions where the majority party is dominant, it is less likely to extend to the House before the adoption of Reed's Rules and the U.S. Senate due to the ability of the minority party to frustrate the ability of the majority party to achieve its goals.

Second, I examine the extent to which conditions of chamber competitiveness and polarization prompt members of Congress to engage in fundraising. When competitiveness is high, legislators understand that their efforts could be pivotal in terms of whether or not majority control of that legislative body flips. At the same time, increased polarization makes legislators willing to endure these conditions because of the increased stakes in terms of which party has majority control after the elections. While I expect to observe this pattern in the U.S. House, the

[26] While Hahn was elected a Los Angeles County Supervisor in 2016, Negrete McLeod was defeated in her bid to be elected a San Bernadino County Supervisor.

increased importance of the Senate majority in recent years makes it likely that it will also extent to that institution. As state legislatures are also battlegrounds for public policies, I also anticipate finding a positive relationship between each of my key variables and party fundraising at the state level. I also examine the role of minority party hardship in party fundraising for representatives and senators, expecting to find fewer contributions by minority party legislators under conditions of hardship. Finally, I conclude this chapter by discussing how my results fit with those of previous chapters.

Minority Party Hardship and the Decision to Run for Reelection

In examining the role of legislative incumbents in the battle for majority control of legislative bodies, the first step is to examine the decision on whether to run for reelection. In his seminal work on Congress, Mayhew (1974) assumes that members of Congress want to be reelected to the body as many times as possible and engage in behaviors designed to maximize their prospects for winning reelection. Perhaps the most notable exception to this pattern are those members of Congress who are progressively ambitious who may leave Congress to run for a more prestigious office such a governor or senator (Rohde 1979). Yet, as the opening anecdotes of this chapter demonstrates, in recent years several minority party Democrats have also left Congress to seek offices that most political observers would not see as a promotion from their current office (although this practice is still not widespread enough to study systematically by itself). Underlying this decision—and the decisions to either take the risk of running for higher office or retire from electoral politics altogether—is an assessment that continued service in one's current legislative body—even in many cases if one could easily win reelection— is not worth it. In this section, I test the hypothesis that increased minority party hardship relates to an increased retirement rate for members of the minority party.

I first test this hypothesis in the context of the post-World War II U.S. House of Representatives. I fit a model for the full period, as well as individual models for the pre- and post- 1994 periods to account for potential changes in the perception that the House majority is in play every election cycle. While my measure of competitiveness suggests that minority party Democrats have had almost no chance of winning the House majority in recent years, Lee (2016) argues that Democrats—unlike Republicans in the pre-1994 era—have not given up on winning back the majority or accepted their minority party status as permanent. Thus, fitting the model in the pre- and post-1994 periods allows for an examination of whether the minority party hardship has a similar effect in both periods.

The dependent variable in these logit models measures whether or not an incumbent decides to retire from a legislative body.[27] The focal independent variables are the hardship index measure from previous chapters, a measure of whether that legislator is from the majority party, and an interaction of these two variables. To review, hardship is measured by subtracting chamber competitiveness from polarization. I expect to find that a decision to retire is positively associated with the hardship interaction term. As in the analogous models for high-quality prospective candidates in the third chapter, controls are included for the number of years since the current minority party has been in the majority, whether conditions of divided government are present, the seat's leanings compared to the nation as a whole in terms of presidential vote, a dummy variable for which party currently controls the seat, and a dummy for whether the seat is located in the South. These models include an additional control variable for the number of terms served by the incumbent member for that seat to account for the fact that longer-serving

[27] Retirement can either involve seeking a different elective office or leaving electoral politics altogether. In most cases, members seeking other offices run for higher offices, but there are a few examples of members seeking what most would view to be lower offices. The correlation between the dependent variable and time is a modest -0.0083.

(typically older) members may potentially suffer from burn-out over time and may be more likely to retire.[28] Finally, given the role that redistricting plays in the decisions made by members of Congress, I also include a control for whether the lines of the district have been redrawn since the previous elections.

[28] I also fit these models with age of the member at the start of the current Congress instead of seniority.

Table 5.1: Minority Party Hardship and Incumbent's Decision to Retire (Post- War)

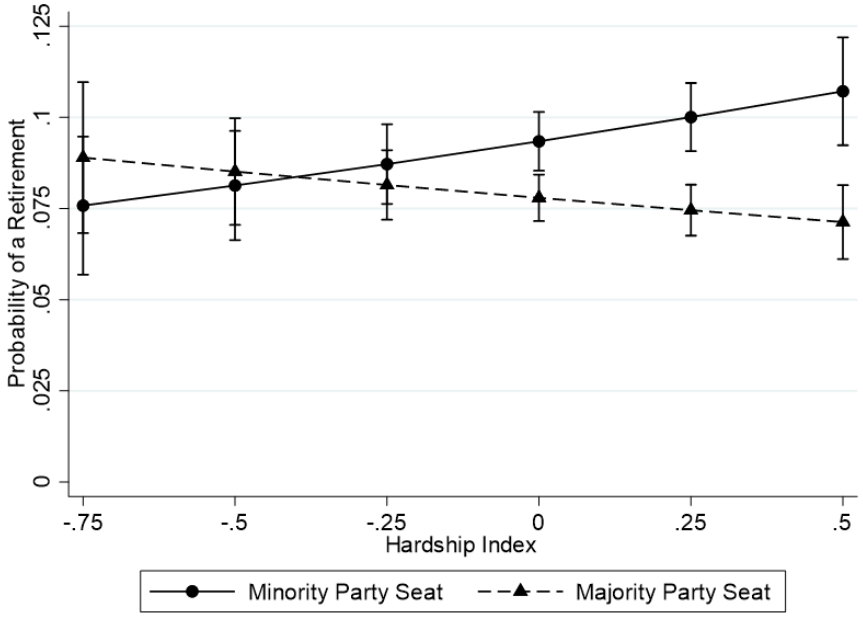
Variable	Post-World War II Logit (1946-2014)	Pre-GOP Revolution Logit (1946-1994)	Post-1994 Logit (1996-2014)
Hardship Index	0.333*	0.329*	0.280
	(0.162)	(0.207)	(0.318)
Majority Party	-0.199*	-0.577*	-0.361*
	(-0.072)	(0.162)	(0.143)
Hardship Index*Majority Party	-0.552*	-0.726*	-0.968*
	(0.214)	(0.289)	(0.388)
Years Since Majority	0.002	0.006	-0.040
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.026)
Divided Government	-0.284	-0.105	0.025
	(0.072)	(0.083)	(0.175)
Seniority	0.079*	0.073*	0.092*
	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.012)
Seat Lean	-0.020*	-0.015*	-0.033*
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.006)
GOP Held Seat	0.288*	-0.191	0.621*
	(0.073)	(0.181)	(0.139)
Located in South	0.073	0.008	0.096
	(0.072)	(0.091)	(0.126)
Redistricting	-0.077	-0.015	-0.168
	(0.082)	(0.098)	(0.157)
Intercept	-2.659*	-2.385*	-2.705*
	(0.103)	(0.195)	(0.262)
N	14,038	9,783	4,255
Log-likelihood	-3,828.752	-2787.630	-1124.902

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures if an incumbent retires.

Overall, the results in these models suggest that minority party hardship plays a role in incumbents' decision on whether to seek reelection. In each of the three models, the interaction between majority party status and hardship is negative. In the full model, the substantive effect is

fairly modest, as an increase in hardship from -0.5 to 0.5 results in an increase in the predicted probability of a minority party retirement from about 8 percent to 10 percent (see Figure 5.1). Nevertheless, even a few additional retirements for the minority party has the potential to make winning back the majority that much more difficult as they have to defend more open seats. Interestingly, minority party hardship has a similar effect in both the pre- and post- 1994 periods, suggesting that hardship has had an effect minority party Democrats in recent years that is not dissimilar to that felt by minority party Republicans before 1994. This finding has important implications for minority party Democrats going forward, as the need to defend an increased number of retirements due to high levels of hardship.

Figure 5.1: Marginal Effects Plot of Minority Party Hardship on Retirement Decisions for Post-World War II House (1946-2014)



Several of the control variables also attain significance in these models. Seniority is positive and significant in all three model, consistent with the expectation that typically older,

longer serving members are more likely to retire than their less-senior counterparts.[29] I also find a negative relationship between the seat's leanings in terms of presidential vote and retirement in all three models. This result suggests that incumbents holding seats in unfavorable territory are more likely to retire due to the prospect of facing a tough reelection campaign.

Next, I move to a different set of legislative contexts to test the robustness of my theory, beginning with the post-World War II House from 1872-1944. I include the same variables in this model other than the redistricting variable because redistricting was uncommon during this time period (Carson and Roberts 2013).[30] As with the post-World War II House, the interaction between majority party status and hardship is negative and significant. The substantive effect is somewhat larger than in the modern House, as an increase in hardship from -0.5 to 0.5 is associated with an increase in the predicted probability of a minority party retirement from about 19 percent to 24 percent (see Figure 5.2). In this model, the divided government control variable is positive and significant, while the seniority and seat lean are both negative and significant. This result for seniority is not altogether surprising, given the rise of a more professional, career-oriented Congress over the course of the 20th century, as the body underwent the process of institutionalization (Polsby 1955).

While there are numerous sub-time periods one could examine in the context of the U.S. House, the period from 1937-1965 is of particular interest due to the dominance in the U.S. House of the Conservative Coalition, an informal group of Republican and conservative southern Democrats (see Rohde 1991). Given the potential for majority party status to bestow fewer benefits during this time period, it may be the case that hardship does not have the same

[29] Models fitted with age instead of seniority are available in Appendix Table 5.8.

[30] The correlation between the dependent variable and time is -0.1956 for the pre-World War II House and 0.0177 for the Senate.

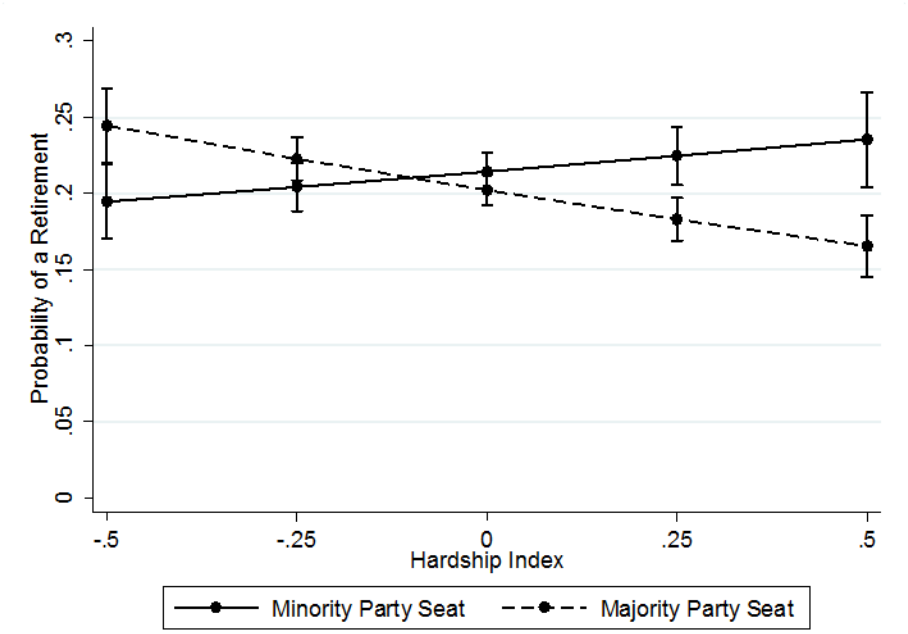
relationship with minority party status. However, I again find a negative relationship between the majority party status*hardship interaction term and retirement. This result may stem from the fact that, although the Conservative Coalition could join together to kill proposals on the floor, the majority party (Democrats for most of this period) still maintained agenda control. The only control variable that attains significance for this model is the years since majority variable, which may reflect some disaffection towards the end of the Roosevelt administration after Republicans had been in the minority party for more than a decade.

Table 5.2: Minority Party Hardship and Incumbent's Decision to Retire, Other Models

Variable	Historic U.S. House Logit (1872-1944)	Con. Coalition Era U.S. House Logit (1938-1964)	Pre-Reed's Rules Era Logit (1872-1888)	U.S. Senate Logit (1914-2014)
Hardship Index	0.246	0.599*	0.791*	0.689*
	(0.152)	(0.207)	(0.277)	(0.327)
Majority Party	-0.075	-0.465*	-0.168*	-0.169
	(0.050)	(0.155)	(0.104)	(0.129)
Hardship Index*Majority Party	-0.744*	-1.130*	-0.717	-0.936*
	(0.199)	(0.298)	(0.382)	(0.455)
Years Since Majority	0.002	0.030*	0.007	0.045*
	(0.007)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.009)
Divided Government	0.452*	-0.174	-0.508*	-0.307*
	(0.065)	(0.134)	(0.131)	(0.124)
Seniority	-0.039*	-0.001	0.064*	0.128*
	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.031)	(0.042)
Seat Lean	-0.009*	-0.007	-0.008	-0.003
	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)
GOP Held Seat	0.080	-0.227	-0.106*	-0.066
	(0.056)	(0.178)	(0.104)	(0.138)
Located in South	0.085	0.901	-0.262*	0.133
	(0.071)	(0.142)	(0.118)	(0.150)
Intercept	-1.316*	-2.063	-0.232*	-1.646*
	(0.089)	(0.209)	(0.199)	(0.182)
N	10,635	4,864	2,257	1,748
Log-likelihood	-5360.997	-1471.735	-1419.204	-895.845

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures if an incumbent retires.

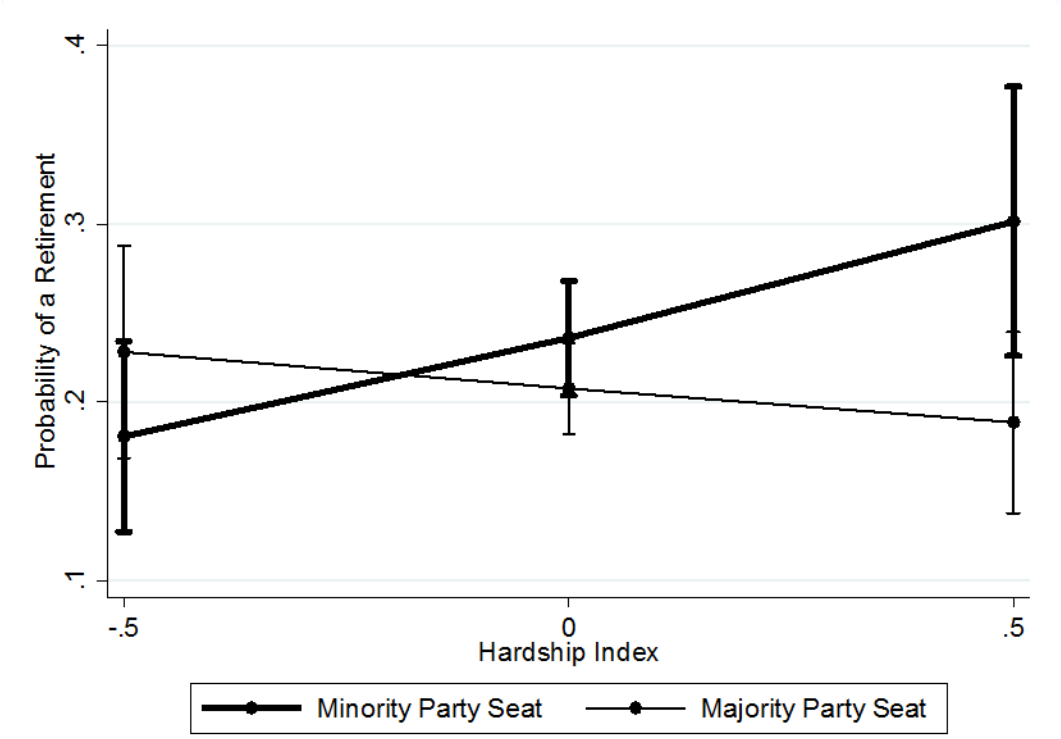
Figure 5.2: Marginal Effects Plot of Minority Party Hardship on Quality Candidates Running for Pre-World War II House (1872-1944)



Finally, I test my theory in the context of two legislative institutions where the minority party is empowered to a greater degree than in the post-World War II House: the U.S Senate (1914-2014) and the U.S. House in the years just before the adoption of Reed's Rules (1872-1888). In both of these contexts, the minority party retains significant power to obstruct the majority, potentially reducing the extent to which minority party status causes members to experience hardship. For the pre-Reed Rules House, the hardship variable falls just short of significance, while narrowly meeting the threshold for significance for the Senate. As institutions that empower the minority party to a greater degree than does the post-War House, these are both hard tests of my theory. While the Senate bestows more power on the minority party than does the contemporary House, frustrations still exist for minority party. In keeping with this experience for senators, an increase in hardship from -0.5 to 0.5 corresponds to a rise in the predicted probability of a minority party retirement from 21 percent to 27 percent (see Figure 5.3). Among control variables, the divided government variable is negative and significant, while

years since majority and seniority are positively associated with retirement from the chamber; this result for seniority is consistent with the result for this variable for the post-World War II House.

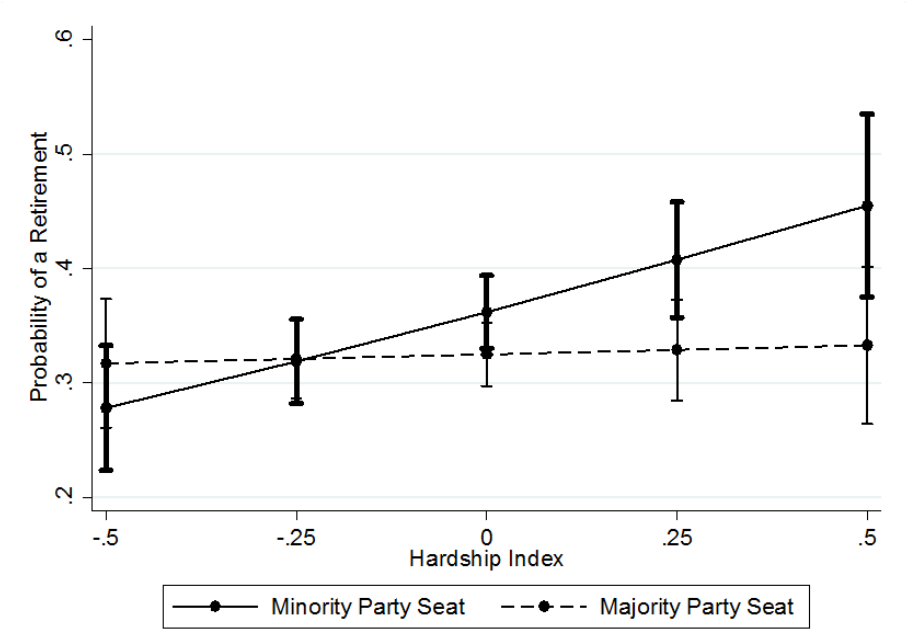
Figure 5.3: Marginal Effects Plot of Minority Party Hardship on Quality Candidates Running for Senate (1872-1944)



A similar pattern exists for the U.S. House before the passage of Reed's Rules. Named after Speaker Thomas Brackett Reed (R-ME), Reed's Rules were designed to consolidate the majority party's power in the U.S. House in response to dilatory tactics being used by minority party Democrats (Cox and McCubbins 2005). For the pre-Reed's Rules House, the relationship between the majority party status*hardship index interaction term is negative but falls short of significance. Substantively, an increase in hardship from -0.5 to 0.5 corresponds to constant probability of a minority party retirement at just over 30 percent. For this model, the South control variable is positive and significant; this result likely reflects the changing political circumstances in the South following reconstruction as African American voters were

disenfranchised until the passage of the Voting Rights Act almost a century later. The divided government and Republican held seat variables are also negative and significant in this model, while seniority is positively associated with a decision to retire.

Figure 5.4: Marginal Effects Plot of Minority Party Hardship in the House before Reed's Rules (1872-1888)



Engagement in Party Fundraising Efforts

In addition to deciding whether or not to seek reelection, incumbent legislators must decide the extent to which they will be involved in party fundraising efforts. In recent years, the phenomenon of party fundraising has grown to become an expected part of being a member of Congress and has gained considerable attention from scholars (e.g. Heberlig and Larson 2012) and the popular press (e.g. Grimm and Siddiqui 2013) as legislators are expected to dedicate a substantial amount of time—4 hours a day, according to Grimm and Siddiqui— to raising money for the party. Past research has focused considerable attention on the role of individual factors—such as serving in congressional leadership (e.g. Heberlig, Hetherington, and Larson 2006)—in prompting legislators to engage in such fundraising efforts. I posit that chamber competitiveness

and political polarization also both affect legislators' willingness to engage in party fundraising efforts. Underlying an examination of the role of these factors is the assumption that, if given the choice, most members of Congress find party fundraising efforts to be unpleasant—Rep. Reid Ribble (R-WI) said that there is "no way to make it enjoyable" (Grimm and Siddiqui 2013)—and would not participate in such efforts if given the opportunity. I hypothesize that conditions of high chamber competitiveness make legislators more willing to tolerate party fundraising efforts due to the potential for majority control to flip in the next election. At the same time, I hypothesize that increased polarization plays a role in party fundraising efforts due to the increased policy stakes associated with majority control.

I first test this hypothesis in the context of the U.S. House of Representatives since 1990.[31] The dependent variable is a count of the number of real 2014 dollars contributed to party fundraising efforts.[32] As with Heberlig and Larson (2012), this measure includes money given directly from legislators' campaign committees to other legislators, money given from legislators' campaign committees to party chamber committees (e.g. DCCC, NRCC), and money given from legislators' leadership PACs to other legislators. Given the rise in campaign spending in recent years, one might expect to find a strong correlation between this dependent variable and time, but the correlation is a fairly modest 0.1726. Due to the over-dispersion of the dependent variable, a negative binomial regression is used for each model. The focal independent variables for these models are chamber competitiveness and polarization, measured in the same manner as in previous chapters. Control variables, as with previous models, include a dummy variable for

[31] This is the first year in the time frame used by Heberlig and Larson (2012).

[32] Eric Heberlig and Bruce Larson generously provided their House data from 1990-2006; Matthew Jansen helped me compile the 2006-2014 House data and 1990-2014 Senate data. I compiled the state legislative data from the National Institute on Money in State Politics (http://followthemoney.org/).

majority party status, a measure of the number of years the current minority party has held that status, whether conditions of divided government are present, the seat's leanings compared to the nation as a whole in terms of presidential vote, a dummy variable for which party currently controls the seat, and a dummy variable for whether the seat is located in the South. Finally, taking into account previous research on the role of service in party and committee leadership on party fundraising efforts, dummy variables for each of these factors is included (e.g. Heberlig, Hetherington, and Larson 2006).

Table 5.3: Incumbent Fundraising for Party Efforts

Variable	U.S. House Negative Binomial Regression (1990-2014)
Chamber Competitiveness	0.449*
	(0.104)
Polarization	6.360*
	(0.707)
Years Since Majority	-0.041*
	(0.004)
Divided Government	-0.725*
	(0.073)
Party Leader	2.952*
	(0.162)
Committee Leader	0.827*
	(0.074)
Seat Lean	0.011*
	(0.002)
Retiring	-0.449*
	(0.110)
GOP Held Seat	-0.023
	(0.060)
Majority Party Seat	0.176*
	(0.058)
Located in South	0.050
	(0.070)
Intercept	9.254*
	(0.409)
N	5,610
Pseudo Log-likelihood	-64,317.246

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures contributions to party efforts; standard errors are robust.

Figure 5.5: Marginal Effects of Chamber Competitiveness on Party Money in U.S. House Elections (1990-2014)

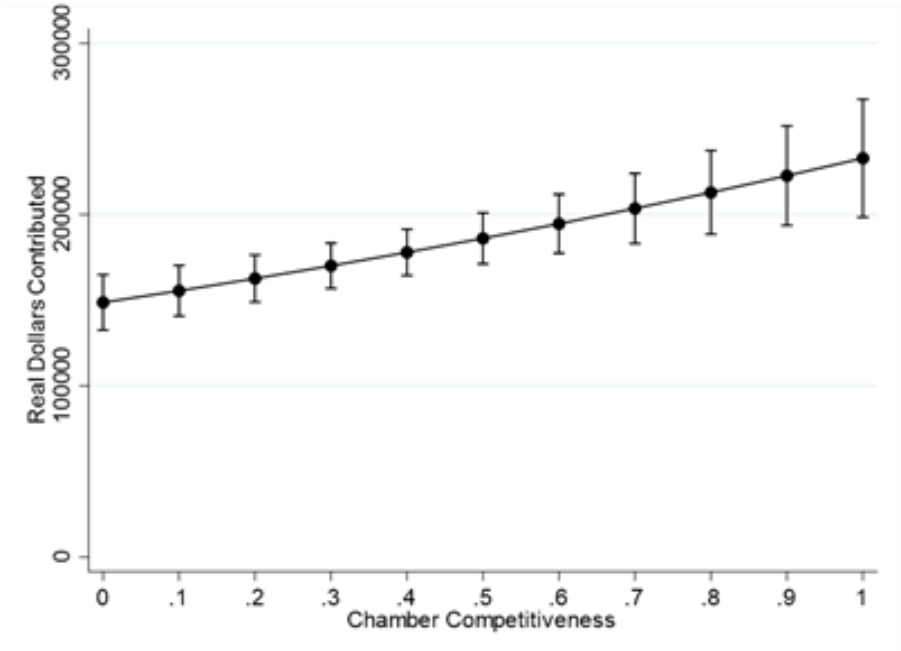
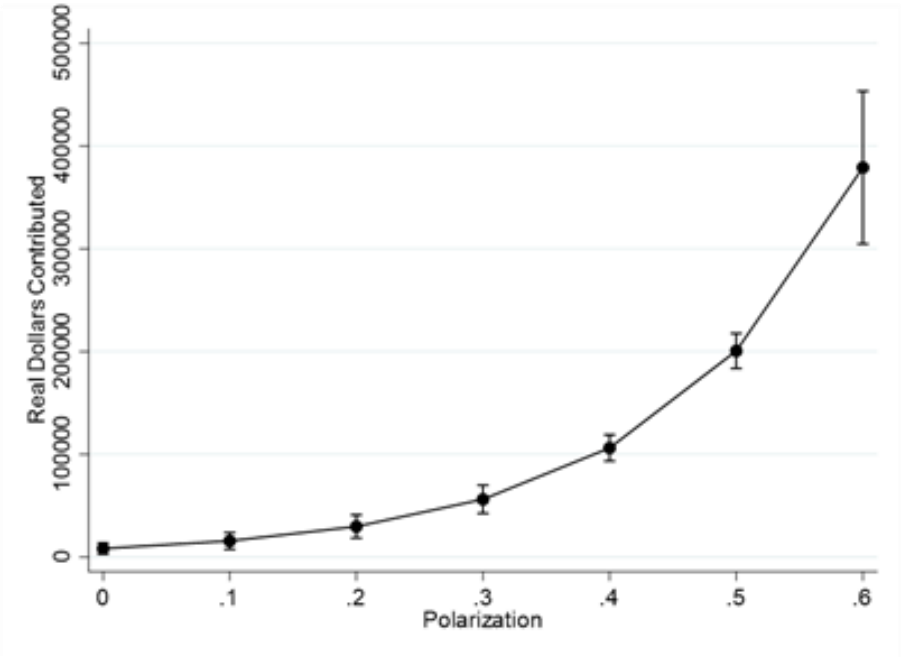


Figure 5.6: Marginal Effects of Polarization on Party Money in U.S. House Elections (1990-2014)



I find a positive relationship between both chamber competitiveness and party money contributions and polarization and party money contributions. In this model, an increase in chamber competitiveness from its approximate mean of 0.3 to 0.6, about one standard deviation above the

mean, is associated with an increase in expected party contributions from $170,000 to just under $195,000 real 2014 dollars.[33] Similarly, an increase in polarization from 0.3 to 0.4 is associated with an increased in expected party contributions from just under $60,000 to just under $110,000 real 2014 dollars. This result is consistent with my hypothesis, demonstrating that members are more willing to put up with the unpleasantness of party fundraising efforts when majority control of Congress is competitive and when Congress is polarized. The results for several control variables also bear mentioning. Consistent with Connelly and Pitney's (1994) observation of disaffection among Republicans who felt they were part of a perpetual minority, the variable measuring the number of years since a party was in power is negatively associated with party fundraising. The divided government variable is negative and significant, suggesting that members are more likely to fundraise in order to maintain or break up unified control of the federal government. As for Heberlig and Larson (2012), the party leader variable is positively related to party money giving. In keeping with the notion that party fundraising is a task that members would rather not participate in if they can at all avoid it, the variable indicating whether a seat features an incumbent seeking another term is negative. Finally, the control variable for whether a seat is currently held by the majority is positive, which is consistent with Kahneman and Tversky's (1979) finding that individuals act to guard against potential losses.[34]

To examine the robustness of my theory as it pertains to party money, I test these hypotheses in several other legislative contexts: the Senate since 1990 and state legislative bodies in 2012 and 2014. I expect to find similar results for these institutions, although the

[33] The values of chamber competitiveness and polarization in these scenarios are approximately the mean and one standard deviation above the mean for that particular institution.

[34] This tendency also may make contributors more likely to give money to the party or parties they perceive to be most likely to win the majority in the next legislative session in order to guard against larger losses in the form of potential unfavorable policies.

consensus-based nature of the U.S. Senate that empowers the majority may make the effect of chamber competitiveness more modest. For the Senate, I also fit a model that includes a term for time-squared due to the somewhat stronger correlation of about 0.4 that exists between time and total party money given (see Stimson 1976). I use time squared instead of time due to problems with multicollinearity that arise when time is included.[35] Several changes are made for the state models: seat lean is compared to the state's presidential vote instead of the country's presidential vote and I control for legislative professionalism using Squire's (2007) measure.

[35] The correlation between time squared and the dependent variable is only slightly less than the correlation between time and the dependent variable, while creating much less of an issue in terms of multicollinearity.

Table 5.4: Senate and State Legislative Incumbent Fundraising for Party Efforts

Variable	U.S. Senate Negative Binomial (1990-2014)	U.S. Senate Negative Binomial (1990-2014)	State Leg. Negative Binomial (2012)	State Leg. Negative Binomial (2014)
Chamber Competitiveness	0.485* (0.212)	0.489* (0.220)	1.855* (0.331)	2.479* (0.432)
Polarization	20.995* (1.278)	17.340* (7.928)	0.461* (0.117)	0.190 (0.141)
Years Since Majority	-0.197* (0.024)	-0.200* (0.026)	-0.011* (0.002)	-0.039* (0.005)
Divided Government	-0.721* (0.105)	-0.251* (0.105)	-0.476* (0.145)	-0.105 (0.124)
Party Leader	1.640* (0.212)	1.639* (0.209)	1.987* (0.198)	2.236* (0.197)
Seat Lean	0.022* (0.006)	0.022* (0.005)	0.012* (0.004)	0.008 (0.005)
Retiring	0.067 (0.213)	0.073 (0.216)	-0.430* (0.175)	-0.586* (0.174)
GOP Held Seat	-0.377* (0.122)	-0.371* (0.124)	0.441* (0.105)	0.605* (0.110)
Majority Party Seat	0.176* (0.118)	0.177 (0.121)	0.170 (0.101)	0.173 (0.113)
Located in South	0.288* (0.127)	0.287* (0.129)	-0.795* (0.130)	-1.069* (0.149)
Legislative Professionalism	-	-	3.782* (0.434)	6.036* (0.416)
Time Squared	-	0.003 (0.006)	-	-
Intercept	4.177* (0.452)	5.356* (2.518)	7.000* (0.260)	7.251* (0.262)
N	1,300	1,300	4,039	4,635
Pseudo Log-likelihood	-13,526.147	-13,526.022	-23,445.889	-25,100.281

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures contributions to party efforts; standard errors are robust.

A significant relationship between competitiveness and party money exists for the United States Senate, although the substantive relationship is more modest. For the Senate, an increase in competitiveness from 0.4 to 0.6 is associated with an increase in expected party contributions from about $147,000 to about $162,000 while an increase in polarization from 0.4 to 0.45 is associated with a substantial increase in expected contributions (in real 2014 dollars) from about $173,000 to about $494,000. These relationships are also largely hold in the model that includes the time squared term as a control variable. A similar pattern is present in state legislative elections in 2012 and 2014, with chamber competitiveness attaining significance in both models and polarization falling just short in 2014. In 2012, an increase in competitiveness from 0.1 to 0.3 relates to an increase in expected party contributions from about $10,000 to about $14,000 and an increase in polarization from 1.6 to 2.1 corresponds to an increase in expected party contributions from about $10,000 to about $12,000. Likewise, in 2014 an increase in competitiveness from 0.1 to 0.25 from relates to an increase in expected contributions from about $14,300 to about $20,800. For this election year, an increase in polarization from 1.7 to 2.2 corresponds to an increase in expected contributions from about $13,500 to about $14,800. While these expected increases are smaller in terms of dollar amount than those for national institutions, state legislative elections tend to be far less expensive than U.S. House or U.S. Senate elections so even seemingly modest contributions have the potential to go a long way (Kroll 2012). Overall, these results demonstrate that chamber competitiveness and polarization play a role in legislators' willingness to contribute to party efforts to raise money for the battle for majority control in a wide array of institutions, inducing them to participate in a process that they would otherwise prefer to avoid.

Figure 5.7: Marginal Effects of Chamber Competitiveness on Party Money in U.S. Senate Elections (1990-2014)

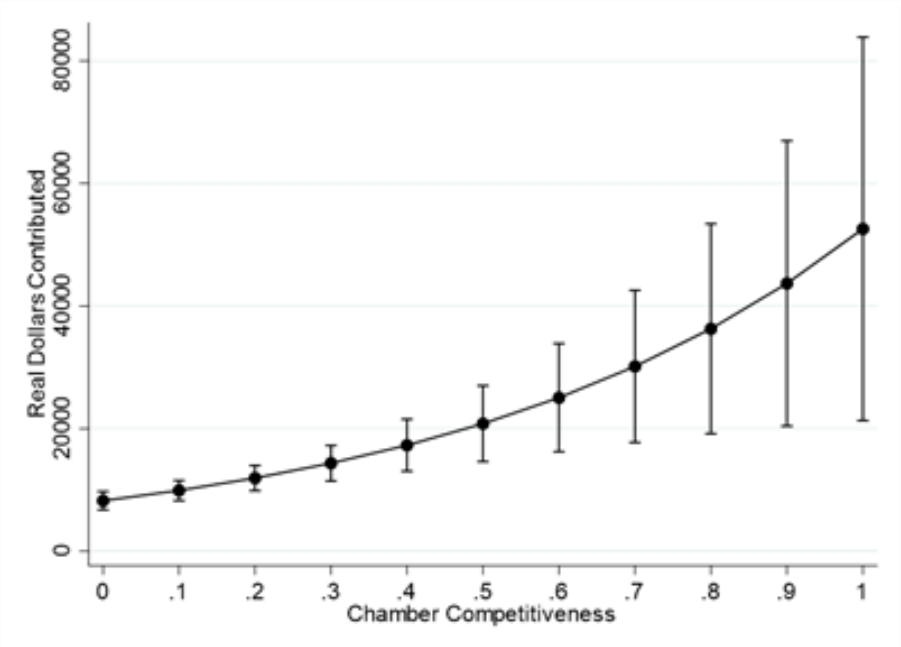


Figure 5.8: Marginal Effects of Polarization on Party Money in U.S. Senate Elections (1990-2014)

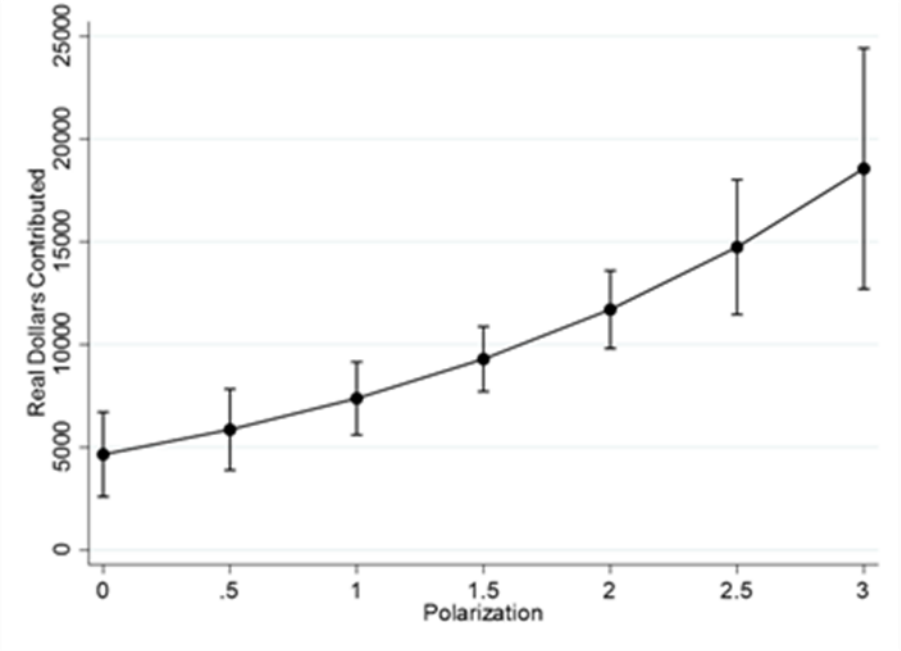


Figure 5.9: Marginal Effects of Chamber Competitiveness on Party Money in the 2012 State Legislative Elections

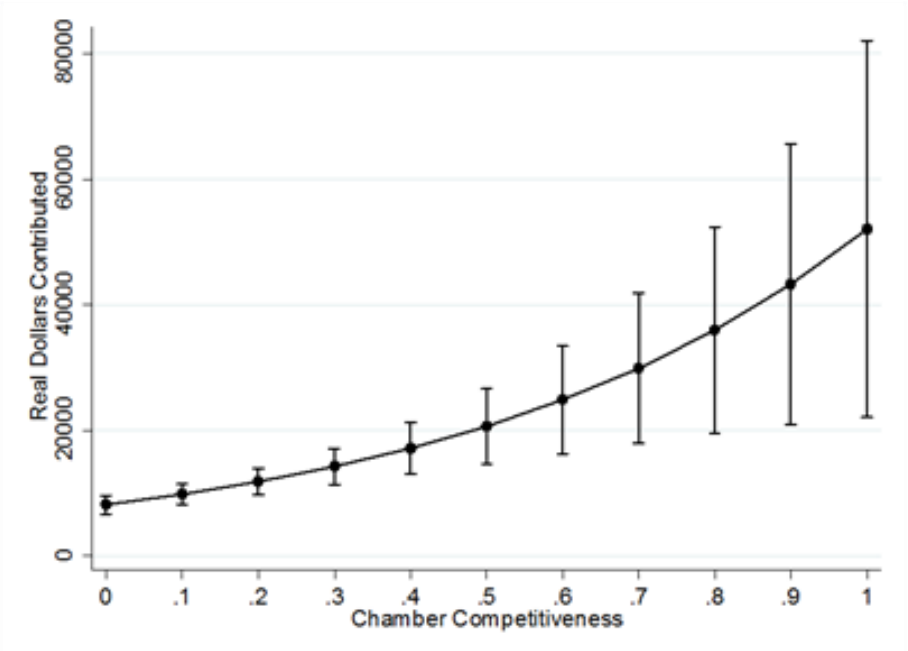


Figure 5.10: Marginal Effects of Polarization on Party Money in the 2012 State Legislative Elections

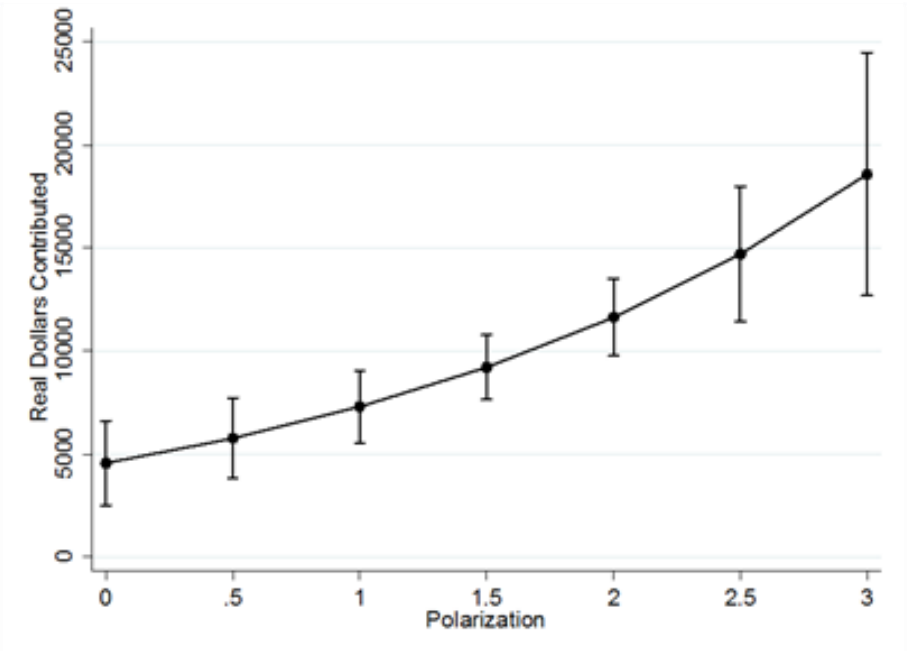


Figure 5.11: Marginal Effects of Chamber Competitiveness on Party Money in the 2014 State Legislative Elections

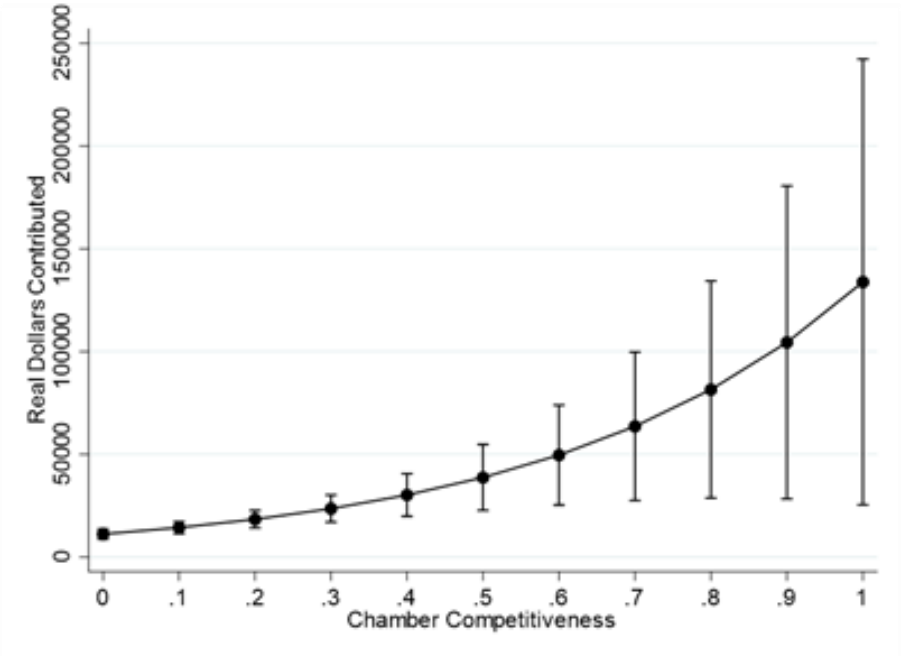
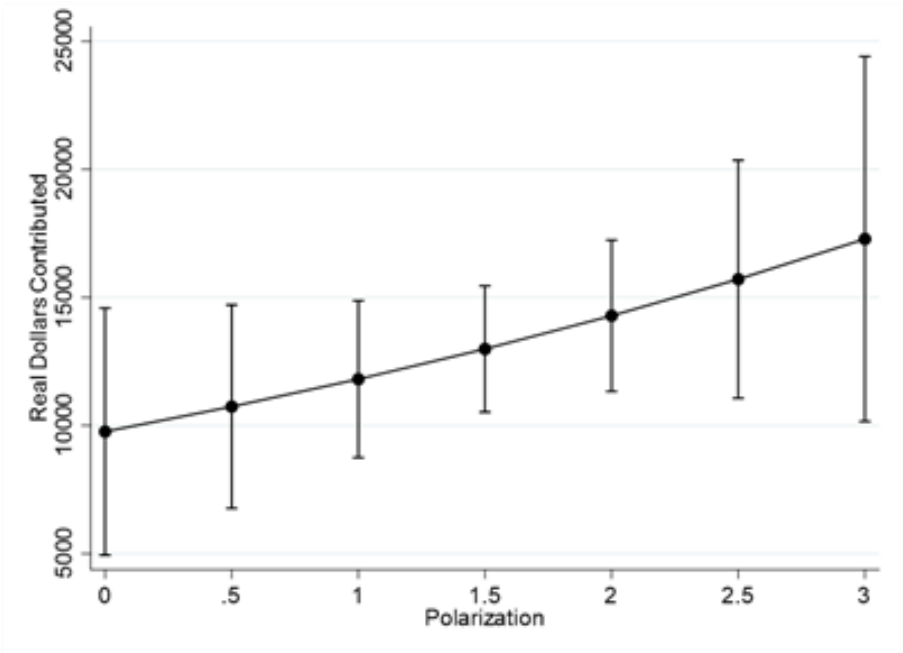


Figure 5.12: Marginal Effects of Polarization on Party Money in the 2014 State Legislative Elections



A number of the control variables attain significance in these models, as divided government and years since being in the majority are negatively associated with party money

giving and party leadership and seat lean are positively related to party money giving (although this relationship is not significant for state legislatures in 2014). Additionally, there is a negative association between whether a seat features an incumbent running for another term and the amount of party money given in both state legislative models. As with the U.S. House, majority party status is positively related to party money giving, although this relationship does not reach significance for the state legislatures in 2012.

The results for two other control variables are different for the Senate and state legislative institutions. For the Senate, Southern legislators contribute more to party fundraising efforts (although this variable is not significant for the House), while southern state legislators contribute less to party fundraising efforts. This finding may be a result of the almost uniform lack of competition for majority control of southern state legislatures, whereas southern legislators in national institutions are part of bodies with members from the entire country. Additionally, Republicans in state legislative institutions contribute more to party fundraising efforts than their Democratic counterparts, while this result is negative for the Senate. In recent years, Republicans have enjoyed a strong advantage in the states, which may explain this result. In both 2012 and 2014 legislative professionalism is significant and positive; this result is consistent with the fact that many of the most professional states (e.g. CA, PA) are also larger, legislators have a greater base from which to draw contributions.

Finally, I conduct a robustness check for these models using a two-part model where the decision of whether or not to give at all is modelled using a logit model and the decision on how much to give is modelled using a log-normal model. The results in these models are largely consistent with those in the negative binomial models. In the U.S. House model, competitiveness is significant in both parts of the model, while polarization is significant in the log-normal

model. For the U.S. Senate and state legislatures in 2012, both chamber competitiveness and polarization are positive significant in both parts of the model. The results for 2014 for state legislatures are somewhat more ambiguous. Competitiveness does not attain significance in the log-normal model, while polarization is significant in the opposite direction in the logit model. As a whole, however, the results from this robustness check further demonstrate a role for both chamber competitiveness and polarization as motivating factors pushing legislators to contribute to part efforts to retain or win control of the majority.

Table 5.5: House Mixture Model Robustness Check

Variable	House Logit Model	House Log-Normal Model
Chamber Competitiveness	0.869*	0.496*
	(0.199)	(0.104)
Polarization	-0.265	6.725*
	(1.160)	(0.577)
Years Since Majority	-0.045	-0.030*
	(0.006)	(0.003)
Divided Government	-0.328*	-0.574*
	(0.124)	(0.069)
Party Leader	2.647*	3.117*
	(0.987)	(0.151)
Committee Leader	0.564*	0.788*
	(0.150)	(0.074)
Seat Lean	0.017*	0.011*
	(0.004)	(0.002)
Retiring	-0.639*	-0.663*
	(0.146)	(0.100)
GOP Held Seat	-0.137	-0.043
	(0.078)	(0.048)
Majority Party Seat	0.099	0.138*
	(0.081)	(0.048)
Located in South	0.114	0.032
	(0.108)	(0.057)
Intercept	2.376*	8.178*
	(0.687)	(0.349)
N	5,610	4,743
(Pseudo) Log-likelihood	-2,201.384	-8,580.605

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures contributions to party efforts; standard errors are robust.

Table 5.6: Senate and State Legislature Mixture Model Robustness Checks

Variable	Senate Logit Model	Senate Log-Normal Model	2012 State Logit Model	2012 State Log-Normal Model	2014 State Logit Model	2014 State Log-Normal Model
Chamber Competitiveness	1.861*	0.328*	1.719*	0.947*	1.768*	0.651
	(0.436)	(0.165)	(0.241)	(0.231)	(0.277)	(0.351)
Polarization	21.892*	18.340*	0.361*	0.306*	-0.215*	0.323*
	(2.235)	(1.071)	(0.087)	(0.085)	(0.080)	(0.091)
Years Since Majority	-0.059	-0.148*	-0.005*	-0.009*	-0.017*	-0.032*
	(0.036)	(0.022)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Divided Government	0.252	-0.288*	-0.181*	-0.638*	-0.353*	0.642*
	(0.177)	(0.088)	(0.092)	(0.108)	(0.085)	(0.101)
Party Leader	1.341*	1.316*	0.577*	1.694*	1.007*	1.498*
	(0.436)	(0.155)	(0.150)	(0.178)	(0.160)	(0.175)
Seat Lean	0.007	0.009	0.014*	0.005	0.023*	-0.005
	(0.009)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)
Retiring	-0.272	0.107	-0.115	-0.349*	-0.448*	-0.734*
	(0.259)	(0.126)	(0.087)	(0.101)	(0.102)	(0.131)
GOP Held Seat	-0.140	-0.134	0.067	0.438*	0.321*	0.430*
	(0.193)	(0.092)	(0.070)	(0.083)	(0.069)	(0.079)
Majority Party Seat	0.097	0.127	-0.134	-0.074	0.010	0.102
	(0.144)	(0.076)	(0.074)	(0.084)	(0.072)	(0.081)
Located in South	0.232	0.203*	0.016	-0.912*	-0.379*	-0.888*
	(0.175)	(0.088)	(0.081)	(0.104)	(0.087)	(0.120)
Legislative Professionalism	-	-	2.832*	2.543*	5.632*	1.631*
			(0.322)	(0.305)	(0.310)	(0.365)
Intercept	-7.600*	4.843*	-1.374*	7.347*	-1.162*	7.685*
	(0.859)	(0.384)	(0.167)	(0.185)	(0.169)	(0.185)
N	1,300	932	4,039	1,935	4,635	1,999
(Pseudo) Log-likelihood	-611.129	-1,400.226	-2,606.128	-3,840.320	-2,796.485	-3,931.916

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures contributions to party efforts; standard errors are robust.

Minority Party Hardship and Party Money

I also examine the role of minority party hardship in party contributions for U.S. House members and Senators from 1990-2014. Given the negative feelings expressed toward party fundraising efforts, I expect to find that conditions of hardship make members of the minority less willing to participate in party fundraising efforts. For this analysis, I again use negative binomial models where the dependent variable is a count of total contributions to party fundraising efforts in real 2014 dollars. For these models, the focal independent variables are the hardship measure used earlier in this dissertation, the majority party status dummy variable, and an interaction between these two variables. The control variables in these models are the same variables as in the previous section.

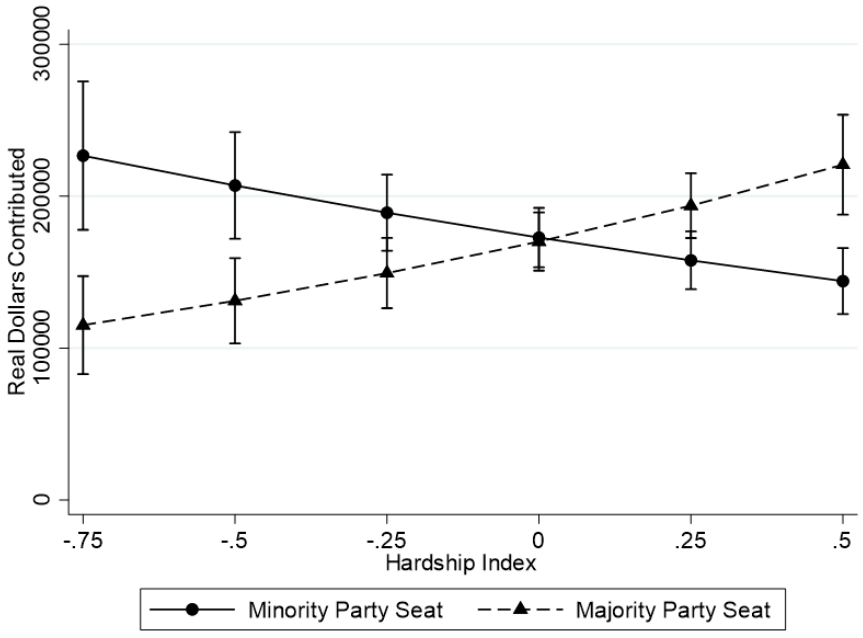
Table 5.7: Minority Party Hardship and Party Fundraising Efforts

Variable	U.S. House Negative Binomial (1990-2014)	U.S. Senate Negative Binomial (1990-2014)
Hardship	-0.362*	-2.197*
	(0.116)	(0.330)
Majority Party Seat	-0.015	0.096
	(0.067)	(0.131)
Hardship*Majority Party Seat	0.883*	0.266
	(0.188)	(0.341)
Years Since Majority	-0.073*	-0.182*
	(0.002)	(0.028)
Divided Government	-1.025*	-0.104*
	(0.064)	(0.121)
Party Leader	3.016*	1.174*
	(0.214)	(0.133)
Committee Leader	0.822*	-
	(0.079)	
Seat Lean	0.010*	0.033*
	(0.002)	(0.006)
Open Seat	-0.406*	0.221
	(0.112)	(0.182)
GOP Held Seat	0.031	-0.534*
	(0.066)	(0.134)
Located in South	0.048	0.305*
	(0.072)	(0.121)
Intercept	12.938*	12.507*
	(0.061)	(0.178)
N	5,610	1,300
Pseudo Log-likelihood	-64,335.656	-13,586.493

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures contributions to party efforts; standard errors are robust.

Consistent with the hardship hypothesis, minority party efforts decrease as hardship increases. As displayed in the marginal effects plot in Figure 5.13, as hardship rises from 0.1 to 0.4, the expected contribution to party fundraising efforts falls from about $165,000 (in real 2014 dollars) to about $147,000. This finding suggests that the disaffection felt by members prompts them to disengage from party fundraising efforts when they feel such efforts may be in vain. In addition to the interaction term, several control variables achieve significance in this model. The years since majority and divided government variables are negatively associated with party fundraising efforts, while party leadership and seat lean are positively related to party fundraising. Finally, members who are retiring give less to the party, suggesting that these members lose motivation to engage in party fundraising once they no longer plan to serve in the institution beyond the current term.

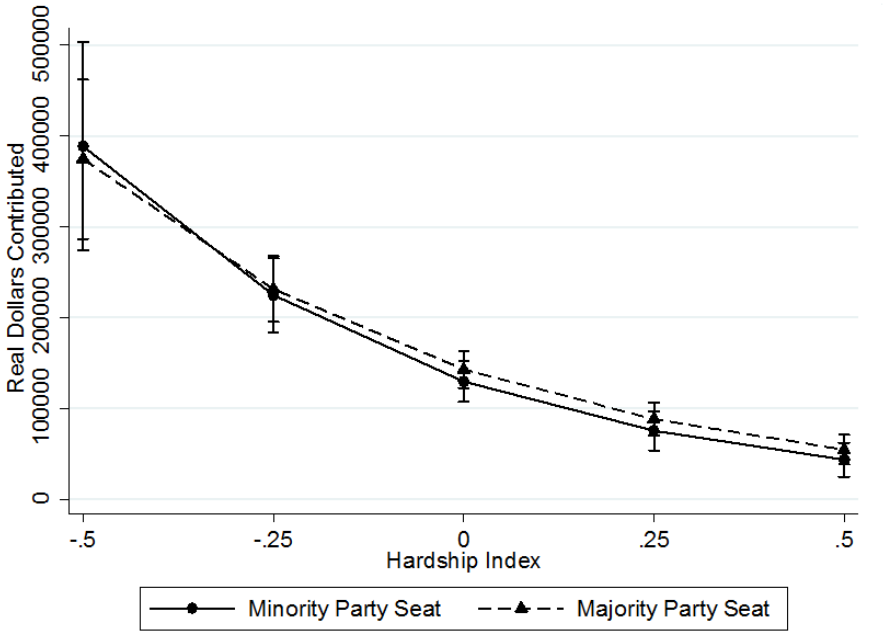
Figure 5.13: Marginal Effects of Minority Party Hardship on U.S. House Party Fundraising (1990-2014)



In contrast to their counterparts in the House, a significant relationship does not exist between the hardship*majority party status interaction term and party giving. As one can observe

in Figure 5.14, the pattern for giving as hardship increases does not differ greatly based upon majority party status. As has been the case for several other findings in this dissertation, this result is consistent with the minority-empowering institutions present in the U.S. Senate that make conditions of hardship less severe for the Senate minority party. Consistent with the House model, however, divided government is negatively associated with party fundraising efforts, while party leader status and seat lean have a positive relationship with the dependent variable. Unlike for the House, Democratic senators contribute more to party fundraising efforts than do Republicans and southern senators contribute a larger amount to fundraising efforts than do senators from other regions.

Figure 5.14: Marginal Effects of Minority Party Hardship on U.S. Senate Party Fundraising (1990-2014)



As with the models in the previous section, I again run a robustness check using a two-part model where the decision of whether or not to give at all is modelled using a logit model and the decision on how much to give is modelled using a log-normal model. For the U.S. House, the hardship*majority interaction term is positive in the expected direction. As with the previous

model, however, such a relationship does not exist for the U.S. Senate. In total, these results are consistent with the negative binomial models for hardship and party giving.

Table 5.8: Minority Party Hardship Robustness Check

Variable	U.S. House Logit	U.S. House Log-Normal	U.S. Senate Logit	U.S. Senate Log-Normal
Hardship	-1.295*	-0.220*	-3.193*	-1.952*
	(0.233)	(0.111)	(0.482)	(0.233)
Majority Party Seat	-0.078	-0.001	0.236	0.127
	(0.095)	(0.052)	(0.162)	(0.089)
Hardship*Majority Party Seat	1.026*	0.867*	-1.379*	0.419
	(0.317)	(0.157)	(0.655)	(0.276)
Years Since Majority	-0.048*	-0.063*	-0.188*	-0.103*
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.038)	(0.025)
Divided Government	-0.377*	-1.041*	0.215	-0.117
	(0.104)	(0.055)	(0.150)	(0.106)
Party Leader	2.660*	3.133*	1.180	1.175*
	(0.989)	(0.151)	(0.404)	(0.172)
Committee Leader	0.564*	0.795*	-	-
	(0.151)	(0.074)		
Seat Lean	0.018*	0.011*	0.024*	0.025*
	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.008)	(0.005)
Open Seat	-0.617*	-0.606*	-0.160	0.209
	(0.145)	(0.100)	(0.239)	(0.160)
GOP Held Seat	-0.095	-0.025	-0.318	-0.311*
	(0.080)	(0.049)	(0.178)	(0.101)
Located in South	0.108	0.038	0.252	0.232*
	(0.108)	(0.058)	(0.162)	(0.105)
Intercept	2.762*	12.117*	1.753*	11.741*
	(0.113)	(0.059)	(0.268)	(0.124)
N	5,610	4,743	1,300	932
Pseudo Log-likelihood	-2,195.956	-8,634.236	-679.273	-1,557.004

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures contributions to party efforts; standard errors are robust.

Discussion

Underlying Mayhew's (1974, 13) theory is the assumption that "the United States Congress is a place where members of Congress wish to stay once they get there." In the early-1970s when this was written and polarization and chamber competitiveness were both at low levels, this assumption is not particularly controversial. While minority party Republicans knew that they would never become committee chairs, they were not entirely excluded from the legislative process and had opportunities to affect public policy. Indeed, as Rohde (1991, p. 7) notes, "by the 1960s, the House was characterized by a system of committee government, dominated by working coalition of southern Democrats and Republicans." Liberals also had the potential to affect the legislative process, particularly after the wave years of 1958 and 1964 increased the number of northern Democrats in Congress. In recent years, both Republicans (in the late 1980s and early 1990s) and Democrats (from 2010- present) have come to experience conditions of high polarization while being part of a seemingly-perpetual minority. When the daily existence for a minority party member of Congress involves consistently being outvoted as policies one views very negatively are passed, the assumption that members of Congress want to stay in the institutions once being elected becomes more tenuous. Indeed, as the results presented in this chapter show, conditions of high polarization and low competitiveness relate to higher rates of retirement as legislators seek other offices or retire from politics altogether.

Also building upon previous work, the results presented in this chapter demonstrate that institutional— as well as individual—factors play a role in incumbents' decisions to contribute to party efforts to win or maintain majority control of legislative institutions. Past research (e.g. Heberlig and Larson 2012) has demonstrated that member's individual ambition to advance in the institution relates to engagement in party contribution efforts. The findings in this chapter

build upon these findings by demonstrating that additional, institution-level factors play a role in members' willingness to participate in party fundraising efforts. Additionally, previous research (at least implicitly) focuses on elections in the 1990s and later because this time period is characterized by high rates polarization where the House majority is at stake in every election. These results add additional nuance by treating chamber competitiveness and polarization as continuous variables, demonstrating that increases in these factors relate to increases in the incumbent engagement in party fundraising efforts. Finally, the fact that the party money hypotheses are tested in the context of the U.S. Senate and state legislatures demonstrates that the proliferation of efforts by legislative incumbents to raise money for the battle for majority control is a feature of an array of American legislative institutions.

The findings in this chapter fit with those of previous chapters, demonstrating the role of chamber competitiveness and polarization in the behavior of political actors. Consistent with the results of previous chapters, increased chamber competitiveness and polarization tend to relate to increased engagement of political actors in the battle for majority control. That being said, increased minority party hardship, as was the case with prospective candidates and party recruitment efforts, has the potential to decrease the involvement of political actors in the battle for majority control. Next, in the final chapter, I will discuss the broader implications of these findings as a whole and how they relate to our understanding of electoral democracy.

Chapter 6: CONCLUSION

The results presented in this dissertation point to an important role for chamber competitiveness and polarization in the decisions made by an array of political actors, including prospective high-quality candidates, political parties, and legislative incumbents. Previous work on legislative politics in the United States tends to concentrate on a single legislative institution, at a single legislative of government. This dissertation presents tests for my theory of the role of chamber competitiveness and polarization in a variety of legislative institutions across time and space. While much of the research motivating this dissertation (e.g. Connelly and Pitney 1994, Heberlig and Larson 2012) focuses on the United States House of Representatives in recent years, I find that the theory presented in this dissertation to be robust in a variety of legislative contexts. Future research should continue to examine the extent to which theories applied to a specific legislative body or a specific time period apply to other contexts (for example, see Carson and Roberts 2013).

While the theory presented in this dissertation is tested in the context of the U.S. House, U.S. Senate, and state legislatures, additional research could apply this theory to other democratic governments. A logical next extension would be to apply this research to another advanced democracy with a first-past-the-post system such as the United Kingdom. Unlike the United States, a number of seats in the UK Parliament are typically won by parties other than the two major political parties such as the Liberal Democrats, Scottish Nationalists, and Plaid Cymru, presenting an initial challenge when looking at party competition. To address this

complication, one could perhaps separately examine the Labour-Conservative battle for overall control, while also examining candidate recruitment efforts of non-major political parties.

The context of UK parliamentary elections also presents a useful context for examining the effects of perceived perpetual minority party status on candidate recruitment. If the hypothesis that the prospect of being in a seemingly-perpetual minority deters high-quality prospective candidates from running under such conditions, one would expect to find Labour to have had problems recruiting high-quality candidates in 1983 and 1987 when Conservatives under Margaret Thatcher won landslide victories and the Tories to have experienced such problems in 2001 and 2005 when Tony Blair's Labour Party won huge majorities in Parliament. Given that polls in the candidate recruitment phase showed the Tories had a substantial lead over Labour under Jeremy Corbyn, future research could examine the quality of Labour candidates in the 2017 general election.[36]

The research presented in this dissertation can also serve as a starting point for the study of a broader array of institution-level factors in the behavior of political actors. Although the focus of this dissertation has been on chamber competitiveness and political polarization, these are not the only potential institution-level factors that have the potential to affect the behavior of political actors. To provide an example, one could examine how the presence of six-year term limits on committee chairmanships, introduced by Newt Gingrich after the 1994 Republican Revolution, affect Republican members' decisions on whether or not to seek reelection (Gugliotti 1999). For example, term-limited House Education Committee Chair Rep. John Kline (R-MN) announced his retirement in 2016. For a single-minded reelection seeker, whether one has a chairmanship should not be especially important to a member other than the extent to

[36] See http://ukpollingreport.co.uk/.

which it allows them to provide particularized benefits to their district. Other institution-level factors that could be examined in terms of how they affect the individual decisions of political actors include campaign finance regulations, the favorability of redistricting maps as a whole, and—in recent years—the stagnation of congressional salaries.

The research presented in this dissertation has important implications for contemporary American politics following the 2016 election and more broadly for the state of democratic government. As Democrats look to rebound following the election of Donald Trump and the continuation of Republican control of Congress in the 2016 elections, the extent to which control of Congress in 2018 appears competitive in the months before the 2018 election is likely to play an important role in the recruitment of quality candidates. In addition to the factors the models in this dissertation uses to construct a measure of chamber competitiveness (e.g. the state of the economy, presidential approval), the redistricting maps approved after the 2010 census may also play a role in Democrats' ability to recruit quality candidates to run for Congress in 2018. This dissertation is agnostic about the extent to which gerrymandering or other factors directly affect the competitiveness of the House majority, but even if the effect has been minimal, even the fact that there is a *perceived* effect may hurt Democratic candidate recruitment in 2018.[37] If prospective high-quality Democratic candidates internalize the notion that "the next chance for Democrats to regain the House majority won't arrive until 2022" (Lochhead 2016)– and the results presented in this dissertation about minority party hardship and candidate recruitment are correct—then Democratic candidate recruitment in 2018 may suffer as a result as prospective high-quality candidates decided they do not want to run if they are all-but-guaranteed to be serving in the congressional minority. As the recruitment of high-quality out-party candidates

[37] As this dissertation was completed after some, but not all filing deadlines had passed for 2018, this section is written in present tense.

makes seat turnover more likely, overall Democratic prospects of winning the House in 2018 may suffer as a result if prospective high-quality Democratic candidates are unwilling to run in 2018 (Roberts, Smith, and Treul 2016).

Additionally, while this dissertation looks at the decision of high-quality candidates to run for office, other attributes of prospective candidates are not examined. Previous research by Thomson (2017) shows that polarization has resulted in a decrease in the number ideological moderates who run for Congress. Future research could examine whether or not chamber competitiveness has a similar effect. Additionally, other attributes of candidates such as gender, personal wealth,

More broadly, the results presented in this dissertation have implications for representation through the choices voters are given at the ballot box. If prospective high-quality candidates are unwilling to run for office, even potentially in seats that are competitive for their party, then a number of voters in such seats may be faced with a choice between a more experience candidate from the other party and a less experienced candidate from their party. Given the advantages that experienced candidates have, the majority party then has the potential to win a disproportionate number of competitive seats. Additionally, if minority party members are more likely to retire under conditions of minority hardship, the quality of representation has the potential to suffer for voters who live in their districts. While the role of seniority has declined from its heyday in the in mid-20th century, a new representative almost certainly has less influence than a senior member.

The findings in this dissertation related to campaign finance suggest that spending in legislative elections and the redistribution of campaign funds among members is only likely to grow if polarization continues to rise. Somewhat perversely for those who bemoan the role of

money in elections, if legislative competitiveness were to decrease, legislators might feel less compelled to participate in party fundraising efforts and less overall money might be spent in these elections. Indeed, if—as many scholars suggest (but see Buchler and Brunell 2009)—competitive elections are good for democracy, then in a system like that of the United States without public financing of elections, high rates of campaign spending may actually be a sign of a health democracy with two parties that are competitive with each other. Finally, as electoral outcomes relate directly to policy outcomes, the findings of this dissertation suggest that the advantages majority parties enjoy have the potential to be magnified under conditions of hardship for the minority party. Already at a disadvantage inherent to their status as a minority, the struggle to recruit high-quality candidates, convince their members to redistribute campaign funds, and increased retirement rate of their members has the potential to magnify this disadvantage, skewing policy outcomes towards the party in power.

APPENDIX

Appendix Table 3.1: Post-World War II War House OLS Model Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Percent of Seats Won	47.00	46.44	32.87	67.82	8.55
Percent of Seats Held	49.29	47.36	33.10	67.82	8.96
Approval	50	51	27	76	13.16
Midterm	0.51	0.50	0	1	0.51
Economy	3.72	3.5	-1.1	8.7	2.38

Appendix Table 3.2: Pre-War House OLS Model Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Seats Won	49.24	51.72	26.43	76.55	12.67
Seats Held	55.15	55.63	29.13	76.55	11.02
Midterm	0.49	0	0	1	0.51
Economy	1.36	0.74	-13.76	18.72	6.87

Appendix Table 3.3: Post-War Senate OLS Model Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Seats Won	49.14	48.96	34.69	68.00	7.84
Seats Held	51.51	50.96	35.00	67.00	7.64
Six-Year Itch	0.17	0	0	1	0.38
Presidential Approval	51	50	27	76	13.16
Economic Growth	3.71	3.50	-1.10	8.70	2.38

Appendix Table 3.4: Pre-War Senate OLS Model Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Seats Won	58.01	57.81	38.54	80.21	11.39
Seats Held	60.68	58.85	48.96	80.21	8.76
Six-Year Itch	0.125	0	0	1	0.34
Economic Growth	2.70	4.59	-13.76	18.71	9.02

Appendix Table 3.5: State Legislature 2012 OLS Model Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Percent Democratic 2013	46.10	45.64	13.33	96	19.30
Percent Democratic 2011	45.25	43.03	13.33	96	18.73
Presidential Approval	45.37	46.45	27.9	64.2	8.86
Economy	4.19	4.01	0.95	16.20	1.92

Appendix Table 3.6: State Legislature 2014 OLS Model Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Percent Democratic 2015	41.59	40	13.33	96	18.57
Percent Democratic 2013	45.04	42	13.33	96	18.84
Presidential Approval	39.24	41.4	19.3	53.4	8.04
Economy	3.33	3.11	1.17	5.39	0.79

Appendix Table 3.7: Post World-War II House Model Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Out-Part Quality	0.21	0	0	1	0.41
Chamber Competitiveness	0.23	0.06	0	0.97	0.31
Polarization	0.32	0.26	0.18	0.56	0.11
Seat Lean	6.28	7.23	-54.74	54.28	10.74
Competitiveness *Seat Lean	2.11	0.12	-18.01	40.39	4.99
Polarization* Seat Lean	2.52	1.84	-13.74	25.18	4.00
Years Out	14.22	10	2	40	12.44
Divided Government	0.60	1	0	1	0.49
Majority Seat	0.57	1	0	1	0.49
Open Seat	0.10	0	0	1	0.31
GOP Held Seat	0.44	0	0	1	0.50
Located in South	0.27	0	0	1	0.44
Hardship Index	0.09	0.21	-0.77	0.56	0.31
Hardship Index*Majority	0.06	0	-0.77	0.56	0.23

Appendix Table 3.8: Pre-World War II House Model Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Out-Party Quality	0.27	0	0	1	0.27
Chamber Competitiveness	0.38	0.32	0.01	0.86	0.25
Polarization	0.35	0.37	0.19	0.46	0.08
Margin	9.83	7.17	-50.74	64.10	13.89
Competitiveness *Seat Lean	3.84	1.99	-38.27	42.02	6.51
Polarization*Seat Lean	3.48	2.46	-21.92	26.47	5.10
Years Out	7.34	6	2	18	4.59
Divided Government	0.27	0	0	1	0.44
Majority Seat	0.59	1	0	1	0.49
Open Seat	0.22	0	0	1	0.42
GOP Held Seat	0.50	1	0	1	0.50
Located in South	0.22	0	0	1	0.41
Hardship Index	-0.03	0.01	-0.49	0.43	0.24
Hardship Index*Majority Party Seat	-0.01	0	-0.49	0.43	0.18

Appendix Table 3.9: Senate Model Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Out-Party Quality	0.57	1	0	1	0.50
Out-Party Quality (3 tiers)	0.91	1	0	2	0.87
Chamber Competitiveness	0.27	0.16	0	0.93	0.28
Polarization	0.28	0.29	0.11	0.46	0.09
Seat Lean	4.00	2.71	-62.96	62.96	10.72
Competitiveness *Seat Lean	1.32	0.06	-19.87	27.12	4.14
Polarization* Seat Lean	1.07	0.625	-19.58	20.67	3.15
Years Out	7.60	6	2	26	6.08
Divided Government	0.42	0	0	1	0.49
Majority Seat	0.57	1	0	1	0.49
Open Seat	0.22	0	0	1	0.41
GOP Held Seat	0.44	0	0	1	0.50
Located in South	0.22	0	0	1	0.42
Hardship Index	0.04	0.08	-0.71	0.34	0.28
Hardship Index* Majority Seat	0.01	0.00	-0.71	0.34	0.20

Appendix Table 3.10: 2012 State Legislative Model Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Out Party Quality	0.13	0	0	1	0.34
Chamber Competitiveness	0.12	0.02	0	0.78	0.18
Polarization	1.63	1.61	0.58	3.10	0.49
Seat Lean Compared to State	10.43	9.46	-40.48	56.55	11.57
Competitiveness *Seat Lean Compared to State	1.28	0.10	-12.43	27.02	3.11
Polarization* Seat Lean Compared to State	17.66	14.43	-62.31	106.55	20.21
Seat Lean Compared to Country	13.73	12.82	-31.92	47.17	12.73
Years Out	23.13	14	2	138	29.32
Divided Government	0.28	0	0	1	0.45
Majority Seat	0.65	1	0	1	0.48
Open Seat	0.20	0	0	1	0.40
GOP Held Seat	0.54	1	0	1	0.49
Professionalism	0.21	0.19	0.03	0.63	0.12
State Senate	0.26	0	0	1	0.44
African American Pct.	11.30	10	0.6	30.6	8.53

Appendix Table 3.11: 2014 State Legislative Model Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Out-Party Quality	0.12	0	0	1	0.33
Chamber Competitiveness	0.07	0.00	0	0.85	0.15
Polarization	1.67	1.64	0.53	3.17	0.49
Seat Lean Compared to State	10.25	9.45	-40.48	56.55	11.67
Competitiveness *Seat Lean Comp. to State	0.63	0.00	-13.16	21.71	1.98
Polarization* Seat Lean Comp. to State	17.76	14.67	-53.51	114.53	20.53
Seat Lean Compared to Country	13.38	12.35	-30.20	47.17	12.61
Years Out	19.13	12	2	84	19.20
Divided Government	0.21	0	0	1	0.41
Majority Party	0.66	1	0	1	0.48
Open Seat	0.15	0	0	1	0.36
GOP Held Seat	0.53	1	0	1	0.50
Legislative Professionalism	0.21	0.19	0.03	0.63	0.13
State Senate	0.20	0	0	1	0.40
African American Pct.	10.58	9.1	0.5	30.9	8.13

Appendix Table 4.1: House Candidate Recruitment Models Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Recruitment Attempt	0.04	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.20
Recruitment Success	0.03	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.16
Competitiveness	0.23	0.09	0.00	0.87	0.27
Polarization	0.39	0.39	0.25	0.56	0.10
Seat Lean	7.78	6.78	-27.16	54.28	10.78
Competitiveness*Seat Lean	2.15	0.31	-15.83	34.70	4.67
Polarization*Seat Lean	3.23	2.45	-12.55	25.18	4.60
Index	0.62	0.56	0.25	1.35	0.33
Index*Seat Lean	5.27	3.25	-27.31	56.41	8.37
Years Out	18.20	17.00	2.00	40.00	13.64
Divided Government	0.70	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.46
Republican Seat	0.45	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.50
Located in South	0.28	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.45
Majority Party Seat	0.57	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.49
Open Seat	0.10	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.31
Post-1990 (Roll Call)	0.65	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.48
Hardship Index	0.16	0.19	-0.39	0.56	0.24
Hardship Index*Majority	0.09	0	-0.39	0.56	0.19

Appendix Table 4.2: Senate Candidate Recruitment Models Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Recruitment Attempt	0.38	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.49
Recruitment Success	0.16	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.37
Competitiveness	0.34	0.31	0.00	1.00	0.29
Polarization	0.35	0.35	0.26	0.46	0.06
Seat Lean	2.57	2.34	-17.21	26.63	7.87
Competitiveness*Seat Lean	1.04	0.15	-14.63	21.62	3.94
Polarization*Seat Lean	0.98	0.76	-7.21	11.64	2.91
Index	0.68	0.68	0.29	1.40	0.32
Index*Seat Lean	2.02	1.25	-21.85	32.28	6.55
Years Out	7.18	4.00	2.00	26.00	7.30
Divided Government	0.70	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.46
Republican Seat	0.47	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.50
Located in South	0.22	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.42
Majority Party Seat	0.56	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.50
Open Seat	0.25	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.43
Post-1990 (Roll Call)	0.66	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.48
Hardship	0.01	0.08	-0.56	0.34	0.27
Hardship*Majority Party Hardship	0.00	0.00	-0.56	0.34	0.20

Appendix Table 4.3: House Campaign Finance Model Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Total Real Spending (Millions of Dollars)	29.53	15.60	3.68	103.80	29.30
Competitiveness	0.23	0.09	0.00	0.87	0.27
Polarization	0.39	0.39	0.25	0.56	0.10
Majority	0.50	0.50	0.00	1.00	0.51
Divided Government	0.70	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.46
Years Out	18.20	17.00	2.00	40.00	13.81

Appendix Table 4.4: Senate Campaign Finance Model Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Total Real Spending (Millions of Dollars)	26.55	18.61	1.97	85.12	20.70
Competitiveness	0.34	0.30	0.00	0.93	0.30
Polarization	0.34	0.34	0.26	0.46	0.06
Majority	0.50	0.50	0.00	1.00	0.51
Divided Government	0.70	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.46
Years Out	7.20	4.00	2.00	26.00	7.43

Appendix Table 4.5: State Legislature Campaign Finance Model Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Total Real Spending (Millions of Dollars Per Capita)	18.24	12.96	0.01	138.73	20.07
Competitiveness	0.12	0.01	0.00	0.85	0.21
Polarization	1.57	1.48	0.90	2.27	0.34
Majority	0.50	0.50	0.00	1.00	0.50
Divided Government	0.32	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.47
Years Out	18.65	10.00	2.00	138.00	24.72
Professionalism	0.21	0.17	0.03	0.48	0.12

Appendix Table 5.1: Post World-War II House Model Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Retirement	0.09	0	0	1	0.29
Hardship Index	0.09	0.21	-0.77	0.56	0.31
Hardship Index*Majority	0.06	0	-0.77	0.56	0.23
Majority Seat	0.57	1	0	1	0.49
Seat Lean	6.28	7.23	-54.74	54.28	10.74
Years Out	14.23	10	2	40	12.04
Divided Government	0.60	1	0	1	0.40
GOP Held Seat	0.44	0	0	1	0.50
Located in South	0.27	0	0	1	0.44
Seniority	5.17	4	0.167	29.54	4.00
Age	52.44	52	25	89	10.49
Redistricting	0.23	0	0	1	0.42

Appendix Table 5.2: Historic House Model Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Open Seat	0.22	0	0	1	0.42
Hardship Index	-0.03	0.01	-0.49	0.43	0.24
Hardship Index*Majority Party Seat	-0.01	0	-0.49	0.43	0.18
Majority Seat	0.59	1	0	1	0.49
Years Out	7.34	6	2	18	4.59
Divided Government	0.27	0	0	1	0.44
GOP Held Seat	0.50	1	0	1	0.50
Located in South	0.22	0	0	1	0.41
Seniority	3.21	2	0.04	23.17	2.67
Age	50.36	50	25	88	9.68

Appendix Table 5.3: Senate Model Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Open Seat	0.22	0	0	1	0.41
Hardship Index	0.00	0.08	-0.71	0.34	0.28
Hardship Index* Majority Seat	0.01	0.00	-0.71	0.34	0.20
Majority Seat	0.57	1	0	1	0.50
Seat Lean	4.00	2.71	-62.96	62.96	10.71
Years Out	7.60	6	2	26	6.08
Divided Government	0.42	0	0	1	0.49
GOP Held Seat	0.44	0	0	1	0.50
Located in South	0.22	0	0	1	0.42
Seniority	1.88	1.41	0	8	1.37
Age	58.26	58	31	98	10.01

Appendix Table 5.4: U.S. House Incumbents and Party Money (1990-2014)

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Party Money	165617.10	38,274.50	0	26,500,000	516712.10
Log Party Money	9.16	10.54	0	17.09	4.32
Competitiveness	0.33	0.29	0.00	0.87	0.28
Polarization	0.45	0.45	0.32	0.56	0.07
Hardship	0.12	0.16	-0.39	0.56	0.28
Majority Seat	0.54	1	0	1	0.50
Hardship* Majority Seat	0.08	0	-0.21	0.56	0.20
Seat Lean	6.79	6.60	-36.32	49.96	12.30
Years Out	12.90	6	2	40	14.06
Divided Government	0.69	1	0	1	0.46
Party Leader	0.01	0	0	1	0.11
Committee Leader	0.096	0	0	1	0.295
Open Seat	0.07	0	0	1	0.25
GOP Held Seat	0.44	0	0	1	0.50
Located in South	0.17	0	0	1	0.37
Time Squared	63.12	49	1	169	53.86

Appendix Table 5.5: U.S. Senate Incumbents and Party Money (1990-2014)

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Party Money	139,979.30	50,731	0	3,363,500	238954.10
Log Party Money	8.19	10.83	0	0	5.29
Competitiveness	0.36	0.31	0.02	0.93	0.29
Polarization	0.38	0.37	0.31	0.46	0.05
Hardship	0.01	0.08	-0.49	0.34	0.26
Majority Seat	0.54	1	0	1	0.50
Hardship*Majority Party Seat	0.01	0	0	0.34	0.19
Seat Lean	3.24	3.43	-25.30	30.05	9.93
Years Out	4.46	4	2	8	2.10
Divided Government	0.69	1	0	1	0.46
Party Leader	0.05	0	0	1	0.22
Open Seat	0.08	0	0	1	0.27
GOP Held Seat	0.49	0	0	1	0.50
Located in South	0.22	0	0	1	0.41
Time Squared	63	49	1	169	53.85

Appendix Table 5.6: State Legislative Incumbents and Party Money (2012)

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Party Money	9596.11	0	0	1,073,338	39579.61
Log Party Money	3.97	0	0	13.89	4.35
Competitiveness	0.12	0.02	0.00	0.78	0.18
Polarization	1.643	1.608	0.58	3.10	0.50
Majority Seat	0.64	1	0	1	0.48
Seat Lean	8.28	7.96	-42.48	56.55	13.12
Years Out	23.39	14	2	138	29.25
Divided Government	0.28	0	0	1	0.45
Party Leader	0.05	0	0	1	0.22
Open Seat	0.18	0	0	1	0.39
GOP Held Seat	0.55	0	0	1	0.50
Professionalism	0.21	0.19	0.03	0.63	0.13
Located in South	0.27	0	0	1	0.45

Appendix Table 5.7: State Legislative Incumbents and Party Incumbents (2014)

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Party Money	11,448.99	0	0	1,859,069	60512.48
Log Party Money	3.69	0	0	14.44	4.43
Competitiveness	0.07	0.00	0	0.85	0.15
Polarization	1.67	1.64	0.53	3.17	0.50
Majority Seat	0.65	1	0	1	0.48
Seat Lean	9.79	9.03	-41.24	56.55	11.91
Years Out	19.49	12	2	84	19.61
Divided Government	0.22	0	0	1	0.41
Party Leader	0.05	0	0	1	0.21
Open Seat	0.14	0	0	1	0.34
GOP Held Seat	0.54	0	0	1	0.50
Professionalism	0.21	0.19	0.03	0.63	0.13
Located in South	0.24	0	0	1	0.43

Appendix Table 5.8: Party Hardship and Incumbent's Decision to Retire w/Age Variable

Variable	Post-World War II Logit (1946-2014)	Historic House Logit (1872-1944)	Senate Logit (1914-2014)
Hardship Index	0.359*	0.290	0.760*
	(0.161)	(0.151)	(0.330)
Majority Party	-0.193*	-0.087*	-0.147
	(0.072)	(0.050)	(0.130)
Hardship Index*Majority Party	-0.542*	-0.784*	-1.019*
	(0.212)	(0.199)	(0.461)
Years Since Majority	0.004	0.001	0.048*
	(0.003)	(0.007)	(0.009)
Divided Government	-0.019	0.474*	-0.275
	(0.072)	(0.065)	(0.123)
Age	0.026*	0.011*	0.039*
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.006)
Seat Lean	-0.020*	-0.010*	-0.003
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.006)
GOP Held Seat	0.225*	0.077*	0.108
	(0.072)	(0.057)	(0.152)
Located in South	0.075	0.098	0.108
	(0.072)	(0.072)	(0.152)
Redistricting	-0.077	-	-
	(0.082)		
Intercept	-3.751*	-1.992*	-3.724*
	(0.191)	(0.155)	(0.400)
N	14,038	10,626	1,748
Log-likelihood	-3851.425	-5359.683	-878.776

*p<0.05; Dependent variable measures if an incumbent retires.

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